

66
75
205

153
2

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. 2 PZ3

Shelf M468H

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Will shortly be published,

A SEQUEL TO THE HONEYMOON, ENTITLED

“THROUGH THE AGES,”

A PSYCHOLOGICAL ROMANCE,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

THE HONEYMOON.

REMEMBRANCE OF A BRIDAL TOUR
THROUGH SCOTLAND.

BY THE

COUNT DE MEDINA POMAR.

AUTHOR OF "ESTUDIOS ACERCA DEL PROGRESO DEL ESPIRITU,"
"LA RELIGION MODERNA," ETC.

35.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.

1874.

PZ3
M468H

“ Perplex’d in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out ;
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

“ He fought his doubts and gather’d strength ;
He would not make his judgment blind ;
He faced the spectres of the mind,
And laid them : thus he came at length

“ To find a stronger faith his own ;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

“ But in the darkness and the cloud.”—TENNYSON.

DEDICATION.

TO THE COUNTESS OF CAITHNESS.

To thee, my dearest Mother, on my nineteenth birthday, I
dedicate "The Honeymoon," my first attempt in the
English language.

MEDINA-POMAR.

STAGENHOE PARK, HERTS,
23d September.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
THE MARRIAGE,	1
CHAPTER II.	
GLASGOW,	20
CHAPTER III.	
RELIGIOUS SCRUPLES,	34
CHAPTER IV.	
DUMBARTON,	70
CHAPTER V.	
THE PUNISHMENT OF PRIDE : A LEGEND,	82
CHAPTER VI.	
THE KYLES OF BUTE,	114
CHAPTER VII.	
THE FIRST SUNDAY,	127

	PAGE
CHAPTER VIII.	
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH,	142
CHAPTER IX.	
FAITH AND REASON,	174
CHAPTER X.	
LOCH LOMOND,	185
CHAPTER XI.	
THE BRIDE OF LUSS,	198
CHAPTER XII.	
TARBET,	214
CHAPTER XIII.	
A MOONLIGHT WALK,	219
CHAPTER XIV.	
THE SUNRISE ON THE LAKE,	243

THE HONEYMOON.

CHAPTER I.

THE MARRIAGE.

THE second of July 18— was the happiest day of my life, for on that day I was united for ever to the purest and loveliest woman that has ever existed in this world.

Concepcion Vargas was in truth one of those angels that heaven sends sometimes upon earth to console men, and help them to bear their cross. Born under the bright sun of Andalusia, and educated in a convent at Seville, the young girl to whom I can now give the sweet name of wife, was the realisation of the ideal of perfection that I so often had dreamt about, and that I had almost given up the hope of finding in this world, where vanity and selfishness seem almost to rule.

An orphan at the age of twenty-one, when I had but just come into possession of the large fortune that, by the death of my father, Lord Carlton, belonged to

me, I found myself alone in that immense and over-populated desert called London. I did not know of a friend on whom to rely in my sorrow ; for although many of the college companions of my youth called themselves my friends, they were as foreign to my heart as the undertakers who had just borne from my sight the cold body that had once been my mother.

My sorrow was intense : my mother had been, till then, the only friend I had known ; and in her alone I had placed all my love, all my interest. I loved her more than a mother ; for since my father's death, that had taken place several years before, when I was but a boy, she had been to me father, mother, sister, friend ; for we two had been left alone in the world together.

While she was by my side, I never felt the want of a family, for she filled the whole of my existence with that love that only a mother can give ; but I suppose God had only been preparing and educating her sweet spirit for a higher and a better life ; and He who had given her to me took her away when the purpose of her earth-life had been accomplished.

Oh, that mine had but finished at the same time !

Lady Carlton had been a model of women, of daughters, of wives, and of mothers ; and so her fate gave me but little anxiety. I had too much confidence in the Supreme Being who so admirably and wisely rules our steps, to doubt of His justice and of His mercy. I know that the good actions of my mother and her exemplary life could but be rewarded as they should by that All-powerful Being to whom men have given

the name of God ; and this conviction consoled me, mitigating my sorrow, and soothing my grief.

Death ! I tried to make myself believe is but a word, in reality it does not exist ; the same as birth, they are but words made by men to express ideas which they scarcely understand. Man has never seen a being born or die : he has seen a spirit appear under the form of a germ, in an embryotic existence ; some time after he has seen this spirit disappear, and his body dissolve into its component material substances ; but as for the principle which gave life to this form, it has always escaped his comprehension. Yet it continues to exist. I am sure of that. My mother's love for me was more than human—it was more than a mere material passion. She had a pure and noble spirit that gave life to her fair form, but from whence it came and whither it has gone are both mysteries to me, for, as Boucher de Perthes remarked with so much reason, “ Everything changes, but nothing dies.” If the decomposition of the body were the end of man's life, we should have to admit a creator who unmakes with one hand what he makes with the other, or two rival powers, two powerful beings, one creative and the other destructive. The ancient Brahmins must have believed this when they established the worship of the two Gods, Brahma and Siva, the first the almighty creator, the second the destroyer, both of whom, gifted with equal power, ruled according to their creed, the universe under the protection of the god Brahm.

In this way, thousands of years ago, did the ancient Hindoos solve the problem that now, as then, puzzled the human understanding.

But if these phenomena of nature seem to us so contradictory, is it because they are so, or is it not rather because we are ignorant of their laws? Yet men will believe in anything rather than in their own ignorance. We have only one thing to guide us in this, as in every problem, Reason—and reason condemns this theory. Oh ! let us beware of believing anything that stands against reason ; God did not give us this great blessing in order that we might believe unreasonable doctrines. The order of nature is *one*, because God the universal Father is one, and and for this reason is his work called the *Universe*.

It is, therefore, impossible to admit two such powers, for, according to this doctrine, that destroys the unity of action, and changes the equilibrium that rules the universe, there would be left in the world nothing but death and desolation. This would be less than nothing, it is the dissolution of matter and the annihilation of spirit, it is chaos.

But it is enough to cast one look over the wonderful universe that surrounds us, in order to see the falsity of this doctrine, everything there lives, everything participates in that divine breath that gives life to matter ; everything in the universe lives, and yet they would have us believe that death alone rules in it ! The very bodies of those we have so loved and that are no more, are, at this moment, full of life,

full of animation. And this is only the house—can its inhabitant have perished?

“Oh! convince me of this,” I cried, “and it will be enough to make me die too, Tell me that my mother has died, and that she is lost to me now and for ever; prove it, and you will find me a cold corpse a moment afterwards. Our life depends, a great deal more than we allow ourselves to think, on that of those who have gone before us to the other side of the grave. Somebody has said *we live with the dead*; yes, we live with them, for what is our existence but a succession of remembrances and hopes? The past and the future! And both are based upon one ideal which we shall never be able to realise in this world. The present is nothing to us, it is but an instant, and we very seldom appreciate its importance, but the past and the future are an eternity—an eternity that is equally dear to us, and this eternity can it not be, even as Bulwer suggested, “a succession of those transitions that men have called life and death?”

Some years previously I had heard Victor Hugo pronounce, over the grave of a young girl that death had just taken from her parents, a discourse that will never fade away from my mind.*

“In a few weeks we have been occupied with two sisters; we have married the one, and we are now burying the other. Such are the perpetual changes of life. Let us bow, my friends, before its severe destiny.

* It was in Guernsey during the year 1865.

“Let us bow with hope. Our eyes were not made for weeping, but in order that we might see ; our hearts were not made for suffering, but in order that we might believe. The faith in another existence proceeds from the faculty of loving. Do not forget this, in this inconstant life of ours, it is the heart that believes. The son believes that he will again find his father, and the mother never consents to lose her son forever. This faith that makes us refuse the idea of annihilation is the greatness of man.

“The heart cannot mislead us. Flesh is but a dream, it soon passes away. If this decomposition were to be the end of man, it would take away from our life all its pleasure and object ; we cannot be satisfied with vapour ; we want a certainty. In spite of being loved, man feels that not one of the points on which he rests is on this earth. To love is to live beyond this world. Without this faith, none of the perfect gifts of the heart would be possible ; to love, which is the object of man’s existence, would be a torment. This paradise would turn into a hell. No, let us say with a loud voice, the being who loves needs immortality. The heart needs the soul.

“There is a heart in this coffin, and this heart lives, and at this moment is listening to our words.

“Emily de Putron was the pride of a loving and united family. Her smiles were sunshine to her parents. She was a flower of beauty in her paternal home. From her cradle, every tenderness surrounded her ; she had grown up happy ; and receiving happi-

ness, she gave it to others; fondly loved, she loved in return. She has just gone.

“Where?—To darkness? No; it is we who are in the dark. She is in the light of heaven, receiving her recompense. Those young girls who have done no evil during their lives, are the holy ones of the grave, and their heads rise slowly out of the tomb towards a mysterious crown that awaits them.

“Emily de Putron has gone to find there supreme serenity, the completion of her innocent existence. She has gone away! Youth, towards eternity; beauty, towards the ideal; hope, towards certainty; love, towards the infinite; pearl, towards the ocean; spirit, towards God.

“The wonderful part of this great celestial journey that is called death, is that those who go away do not leave us. They are in a world of light, but they visit, although unknown to us, our world of darkness. They are at once above us and at our side.

“Oh thou, whoever thou art, who hast seen the body of a beloved being disappear in the darkness of the grave, do not make yourself unhappy. He is always there. He is at your side, closer even than he was while on earth. The beauty of death is the presence, the indescribable presence, of the souls we love smiling at our tearful eyes. The being we mourn has disappeared, he has not gone away, we no longer see its sweet face. . . . the dead are the invisible, they are not the absent.

“Let us give full justice to death. Do not let us be

ungrateful to it. Death is not, as it is so often said, a separation and a forgetfulness. It is a mistake to believe that here, in the obscurity of this open grave, everything is lost. Here everything is found anew.

“The grave is a place of restitution. Here the soul gains back the infinite ; here it finds its full powers ; here it comes into possession of its mysterious nature ; free from the body, free from wants and pains, free from burden, free from everything. Death is the greatest of *liberators*. It also is the greatest of *progressors*. Death is the augmentation of all that has arrived to the superior degree of all the superior qualities. Every one receives therefrom his augmentation. Everything is transfigured in the light and by the light. He who has been honest on earth becomes beautiful ; he who has been beautiful becomes sublime ; he who has been sublime becomes good.”

This philosophical and spiritual discourse had made an extraordinary impression upon my heart, but I did not arrive at its full meaning, I did not comprehend nor understand all its beauties to their full extent, till the moment when my mother's death came to plunge me, in my turn, into the deepest grief.

In spite of this, hope, that ministering angel that God sends to console and sustain man in his deepest sorrows, came to my rescue, and I tried to convince myself that my grief, after all, was only selfishness, and that I ought instead to be glad that my mother

had at last quitted this miserable world, and taken her place among the angels in heaven.

Such was the train of thought that occupied my mind; my sorrow was not so much caused by her absence as by the solitude in which her death had left me. I saw myself alone in the world where I had been so happy in her company. I did not dare to weep for her death—such a thing seemed to me a sacrilege, an open opposition to God's law. Moreover, her happiness did not make me in the least uneasy, the same faith that prevented my shedding tears upon her grave assured me of that. But mine? What was going to become of me? Alone! I who had never left her side for a single day!

One day, soon after her death, I received the following letter, and this short epistle restored to me by slow degrees my spiritual strength. It ran thus:—

“MY DEAR WALTER,—A great blow has fallen upon you. I must see you, and console you. I appreciated the one you so loved. But I do not grieve for her. You also, my friend, ought to see farther than the horizon, and then you would believe, as I do, in the reality of the future life. But it is not to you to whom I should say *hope*. You are a philosopher, and what is more, a man with a heart.

“You should not grieve for the death of your mother. Do you think for a moment that she has left you? No, I at least am sure that she is always at your side, guarding and guiding you—invisible to your eyes, but not so to your heart. You have lost

the outward form of the mother, it is true, but not the mother's love and guiding care."

After reading this consoling, manly, and feeling letter several times, I resolved to go and see this friend. A man who could write with so much conviction and earnestness about immortality, must have at least sure proofs of its truth. Not that I doubted it for a moment, but that in my anxiety, and in my present frame of mind, I wanted some one with whom I could converse freely upon this, the most important, in my case, of all questions.

I therefore went to my country-house in the north of England, near which this friend resided. But the sight of the ancient mansion of my fathers only made the few days that I spent there sadder still. The sight of those deserted drawing-rooms, that I so often had seen full of friends in my past happy and joyous days, that immense hall, where my mother had so often played with me when a child, filled my heart with the most profound grief, and not even the consoling words of my friend, nor my philosophical speculations, could divert my mind from the dreadful contrast of the present with the past.

Allen Adare, this was the name of my friend, seeing me in such a state, and observing that my health was also becoming affected by my long meditations and inaction, resolved on taking me away from those sad remembrances of the past.

I, in my turn, was only too glad to quit England. Its damp climate, and its dull and heavy atmosphere

had, I thought, a great deal to do with my illness. Could I but see the sun, breathe the fresh air of heaven, I thought I should soon recover and master my sadness.

Allen Adare and I started, therefore, on a journey that we meant at the time to last at least a year, at the end of which some new train of ideas, (such was his language,) would make me forget the shock that at present was only too fresh in my mind.

France was the first country we visited.

We spent at least a month in Paris, but this gay city, that I had so much admired when I saw it for the first time with my mother a few years previously, could not on this occasion dissipate the grief that consumed me by slow degrees. I wanted something new, new places and new people. It was the month of November, and the winter was just beginning, accompanied with all its miseries. We proceeded then south to Spain, and after visiting Madrid, and two or three other towns, we determined to spend the winter in Seville.

It was there I found the angel that was to console me at last, and that was to change the whole of my existence, restoring to my heart the happiness I had lost.

It seems so strange to talk of sorrow and grief, now that I am so happy ! but the remembrance of the sad past seems to make my present only the brighter.

Surely, surely, my friend was right, and my angel mother's watchful love had guided me to happiness again.

During my stay in the ancient capital of the Moors, I frequented the *tertulias* of the Countess de Fuen-carral; these kind of receptions, only known in Spain, brought me into frequent contact with several persons whom otherwise I should have utterly ignored.

Of those the one with whom I was most intimate was Doña Manuela Vargas, a lady of middle age, widow of a colonel in the Spanish army, who had died in the seven years' war against the Carlists. This lady was one of those few women who bring life and animation wherever they go; her wit was great, and her accomplishments, although she did not in the least make a show of them, were brilliant and numerous.

She offered me her house, according to the old Spanish fashion, and I lost no time in going to see her. Our friendship grew deeper every day, and the more I saw of her the more I liked her.

One day she told me that she had a daughter of nineteen in a convent near the town in Friana, and that she wanted her to come and live with her; for although she was very happy with the nuns, she was almost too old to be with them as a school-girl, and she would never consent to her taking the veil, and thus to lose her only child for ever.

I naturally approved of this decision, in spite of being a Roman Catholic. I did not at all like the idea of a young girl shutting herself up for ever in a convent. This seemed to me against all the laws of God and nature.

La Señora de Vargas and myself drove down that afternoon to see her daughter at the Carmelite convent, on the other side of the bright Guadalquivir.

We were shown first into a dark, half-Moorish, half-Gothic cell, and afterwards we passed into that mysterious room where the world ends and the seclusion of the monastery begins. The iron gate was opened by some unseen nun, and out of the darkness of the inner cell there came into the old Moorish apartment a perfect vision of light, the most beautiful creature that I had ever beheld.

It would be impossible to paint her beauty, for it was felt rather than seen. It would be impossible to describe those bright yet dreamy eyes, half hidden by long and dark lashes. Her hair was of the brightest gold, and as glittering. At that moment, illuminated by the rich full colours of the old painted windows, she looked like a *Conception* of Murillo's stepping out of her frame—a blonde *aux yeux noirs* such as we only see in the ideal pictures of the saints.

Her dress was the plain blue serge worn by the school-girls of the convent, and her head was covered by the whitest cap of French muslin, open at the back to allow two long and abundant golden tresses to escape, which nearly touched the ground.

Her dress, her figure, her face, the dark back-ground against which she stood, the surrounding pictures and coloured windows, the entire aspect of the apartment, made such an impression upon me, that when Doña Manuela said, "*Concepcion ven á mi corazon*," I really

thought that I beheld the Virgin herself coming from the interior of the holy church in her most beautiful and divine of impersonations, as we see her represented in the famous pictures of the *Conception* both at Madrid, at Seville, and at the Louvre.

The impression was so great, that I nearly fell at her feet, as if bending my knees before the mother of God.

But this was only for a moment, for the next found her in the arms of her mother; and there, warmed by the maternal heart, her cheeks bloomed with the freshest and most delicate of rose tints.

In this position, that aroused her earthly love and affections, she looked scarcely less lovely, perhaps more so to me, as she seemed more within my reach.

The happiness that the beautiful Concepcion showed when she saw her mother made me almost forget my sorrows; and the day that I passed by the side of this innocent and bright angel was the first happy one that I had experienced since the death of my mother.

She heard the news of her leaving the convent with tears in her eyes. "Don't you like the idea, Señorita, of leaving the college?" I asked her.

"Yes," she answered, in the rich language of Cervantes, "I like it because it is the will of my mother, but I am afraid I shall never be so happy in the world as I have been here amongst my flowers and my books, beloved by the nuns and by my companions."

There was so much innocence, so much feeling, in those few words, that my heart nearly burst when they were uttered. "Poor young girl!" I thought, "how many wrong notions those ignorant old women must have given her about the world and its inhabitants!"

When we were returning in the carriage from the convent, I could not restrain myself from giving expression to what my heart was so full of. "What a beautiful daughter you have, Doña Manuela," I said; "she is indeed a Concepcion, and a real conception!"

"We all call her Concha or Conchita," said the over-joyed mother, "we think it is shorter and prettier." Then, changing her bright smile for a more serious look, she continued, "I am sorry to be obliged to take her away from that convent, there she is happy, and she is well cared for by the sisters. Who knows, as she herself said, if she will be the same in the world? The countess has promised to present her to the Infanta, the Duchess de Montpensier, that will, perhaps, bring her into notice."

"Oh!" I answered impatiently, "I am sure she will make a great sensation in the palace of San Telmo. I am only afraid that you won't have her with you long after she comes out."

"Do you think so, Lord Carlton? I fear, on the contrary, that she will pass unnoticed, and that she will at last have to return as a nun to the convent that now she quits as a girl. You see we are poor, and we have no name. She is beautiful, I can not

deny that, but what is the use of beauty? She is too natural, too innocent, too retiring to attract the attention of the world."

A week after, a great ball took place in the palace of the Countess de Fuencarral, to celebrate the coming out of Concha Vargas.

I had the pleasure of dancing with her, as a foreigner, her first valse, and if I had thought her beautiful in the dark cell of the monastery, when dressed as a school girl, how splendid and dazzling did I not think her now, enveloped in clouds of white tulle, and in a brilliantly lighted room!

From that instant the young men of Seville almost abandoned the former belles, and dedicated all their attentions to the new beauty that had appeared amongst them, for, even in the luxurious saloons of the ancient capital of Andalusia, so proverbial for the witching beauty and loveliness of its dark eyed daughters, Conchita was the most beautiful, the most lovely, the most attractive of them all.

Her pearly white skin, and the profusion of golden tresses that fell over her shoulders, made, I think, a great impression, contrasting with the dark haired and proud Spanish beauties.

I observed her during all the rest of the season, and I saw, with great pleasure to myself, though I could not then tell why, that she received the courtesy and flattery of the aristocratic youths of Seville with the greatest indifference.

From the night of that first ball I managed to

see her every day, sometimes I met her with her mother in the cloisters of the cathedral, sometimes I saw her in the saloons of the ducal palace of the Montpensiers or in the gardens of the Moorish Alcazar; frequently I met her at friends' houses. She attracted me in a manner most inexplicable to me, but that always compelled me to follow her. At first it was her face that seemed to fascinate me, but soon I found that her soul had even greater power over my heart.

Her conversation was so agreeable, so full of sentiment, so interesting. She alone had been able to make me forget my great loss, for which I was still in the deepest mourning. Life had been as a blank to me before I had met her, but now she filled the empty space that another love had so recently left in my heart, for, as La Rochefoucauld said,—“In the human heart there is a perpetual generation of passions, so that the ruin of one is almost always the foundation of another.”

When I compared her with the other young ladies of my acquaintance, her charms seemed to grow greater and greater. What a difference between her and the English girls that are either so cold or so fast, and all, more or less, modelled after one pattern, or the Spanish beauties, so proud, so passionate, so jealous of their beauty. In her, everything was natural, sympathetic, pure.

The day that I ventured to declare my love, I thought I should have died, fearing she would answer

me that she loved another. But it was not so, and I soon found that she loved me as much as I loved her.

I asked her hand of her mother, and la Señora de Vargas answered me with tears in her eyes, that she only wanted to insure the happiness of her daughter, and that if she loved me, our union would be blessed by her with all her heart.

On the morrow our engagement was in everybody's mouth. With what pride did I not receive the congratulations and good wishes of my friends!

We decided that Madame Vargas and Conchita should come with me to England in order to accustom her to the new country, and to the new society in which she was to live and move in the future, and so as not to separate her all at once from her mother.

We left Seville early in April *en route* for London. Allen Adare accompanied us as far as Paris, where he left us on his way to Baden.

I shall always remember with pleasure my stay in Spain. I had arrived there the most miserable of men, and lo! I returned from thence the happiest of lovers.

Such are the changes of life. One day the sun may shine upon our sorrows, and the next it may dawn upon our happiness, everything in this world is so uncertain. But we should not complain, for this very uncertainty is, perhaps, its greatest charm.

On the second of July took place the ceremony that united our destinies for ever. "*Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*"

That same afternoon we left London by the express train for Scotland with the intention of spending there our *honeymoon*.

This trip, that will always be associated in my heart with the dearest remembrances of my life, is the subject of this book. It may seem strange to begin a book with a marriage ceremony, but how often does not man's life in reality begin with one?

In this book I will try to paint some of the happiest hours of my life.

Let us begin therefore

“*The Honeymoon.*”

CHAPTER II.

GLASGOW.

GLASGOW is the second capital of Scotland, and its mercantile metropolis. The town is situated in Lanarkshire, on the banks of the Clyde, in that place where its waters become navigable. The hills of Campsie and Kilpatrick form a wall that protects the city on the north and on the east. Its climate is temperate, on account of its vicinity to the sea and the mountains that surround it. This city was founded in the year 560 by St Mungo, its patron saint.

Our journey from London to Scotland had been made in about twelve hours, and at nine in the morning of the 3d of July we arrived in Glasgow.

The first impression that this great city produces upon the stranger who arrives there for the first time is in reality not a very agreeable one. Some time before entering the town itself, the train passes through a country almost uncultivated, and, to a great extent, bare and dirty, where nothing meets the eye but an innumerable succession of manufactories, that seem to have been placed there to announce to the stranger the great manufacturing riches of the

town to which he is bound. These fabrics are generally built of bricks that the smoke and damp soon render black. If we look before us towards the point of attraction to which we are going with such velocity, we can only see a dark mass that extends for several miles on the horizon, crowned with thousands of tall chimnies that seem to rise from the darkness below to the pure air and bright atmosphere of the skies. Such is the first impression that this great city made upon our minds when seen from the railway.

The train, after traversing the suburbs and the great manufactories, enters into a tunnel, at the other side of which is the station, that, like all the great stations, is a labyrinth of trains, carriages, and omnibuses.

I must say that all this bustle and fuss did not in the least please Concha, who expected to find the Scotland very different that I had painted to her as so poetical and so picturesque. She could not but compare this new Babylon with that other metropolis even more busy and over-populated that we had just quitted.

The hotel at which we intended stopping was situated near the station, and it even had a door that opened into it; so leaving my valet in charge of the luggage, I gave my arm to my youthful wife and went into the hotel.

This was full, but as I had fortunately written for rooms some days before, no sooner had they learnt our

names than they conducted us to the little sitting-room they had prepared for us, where a quarter of an hour afterwards we breakfasted together, Conchita and I, as if we had been husband and wife for years !

In the afternoon we went out to see the Cathedral. This we found to be a beautiful old Gothic church, but not of that elegant and elaborate Gothic style that we admire so much in the cathedrals of Milan and Burgos, but of the gloomy, massive, and cold architectural style of the north.

The exterior is sombre and imposing. A tower of some height rises from its centre, and the whole of the church is surrounded by a graveyard which used to be the burying-place of the ancient inhabitants of the diocese. The site that this old minster occupies adds a great deal to its dull and melancholy aspect. On one side lies the town, but, unfortunately, the part of it that one sees is the poorest and oldest, and is more suggestive of decay and misery than of poetry and architectural beauty.

On the other side rises the Necropolis, a hill of rather small dimensions, that to-day serves the purpose of cemetery. This burial ground presents a striking and solemn aspect when viewed from the steps of the old cathedral. On the highest part, that rises about 250 feet from the level ground, is situated the monument of John Knox. This column of granite, straight and solemn, which seems to pierce the very skies without the least effort, never bending its proud top, and looking grimly all the while down.

upon the church below, struck me as the most appropriate emblem of the great reformer's soul.

We went into the cathedral by a side door that admitted us at once into the great nave. The interior of this church is cold and dull, and the obscurity and silence that prevail produce a disagreeable sensation. The nave was at the time full of tourists, some with hats on their heads and hands in their pockets, others looking at the ceiling with their opera glasses, none seeming in the least to feel that they were in a church.

The effect that a Protestant temple produces on the mind is always contrary to that caused by a Catholic structure,—that of solitude and sadness. Conchita, I suppose, felt this too, for she leant on my arm and came as close to my heart as possible. I knew that this lonely and damp building displeased her, and that her vivid imagination refused this cold and monotonous form of adoration, for the serious and dark architecture of the Scotch churches does not touch the human heart.

“What a difference there is between this and the Catholic churches!” she exclaimed. “Here they make religion the dullest and saddest part of man's life, when it should be, on the contrary, the happiest and most joyful act of our whole lives; for in what is there so much pleasure as in talking with one's own Father—with one's own God? The consequence is, that real devotion is unknown in this country; it cannot exist; their mode of adoration cannot inspire

them with any holy passion ; it cannot light in their hearts any sacred fire ; their religion is as cold as these bare and dull stones that decorate their churches. See there, those men with their hats on their heads, do you think that if they felt themselves in a really holy place, they would not take them off? I defy anybody to go into the Cathedral of Seville without feeling moved by something holy, by something that tells him that he is in the presence of his Creator and Judge."

"You are right, Conchita mia," I answered her, "the Scotch form of worship is as cold and dull as their country ; but this arises only from their character. That which for us is the object of greatest joy, is for them the most serious and solemn act of their lives."

Concha looked at me for a few seconds, and then she said in the full and rich language of Cervantes, "The Catholic church is the church of the heart, the other churches are only churches of the mind, this is their greatest difference. The Church of God appeals to the conscience, to the senses, and to the imagination. The Protestant Church appeals only to the human understanding, that, in most cases, is but too indifferent or mistaken. The one is based on faith, the other on——"

"Reason," I suggested.

"Well," she continued, "perhaps, but on human reason, which may be true or mistaken. In the one, you are sure to be right, in the other who can tell?"

“The Church of Scotland,” I said, “is admirably adapted to their physical temperament ; it would no more do for the Latin races than the religion of the latter would do for the Scotch, and yet they had the same faith not so very long ago, but I am sure that even then a great difference must have existed between the two : difference that must have found its excuse in the distance it was from Rome, and in the difficulties of communication which, at that time, were so great, and which have only lately, comparatively speaking, been removed.”

“And they call that Religion !”

“Yes, my darling ; and it is as true a religion to them as yours is to you, or the Koran is to the Arabs. They who seem so cold and passive to you, would not hesitate in condemning your views, which they would even call atheistic if they did not agree with their own. They consider everything a sacrilege that would render their worship pleasanter and easier, and that would soften and make less terrible their idea of God.”

Conchita gave a sigh and murmured a prayer ; “I pity them,” she said, and moving on again, we passed into the inner church.

In this second church is placed the altar, or rather the communion table, that is just a plain wooden table, and the choir with the organ. In this place, used to be, in ancient times, the high altar of the cathedral, radiant with lights, gold and jewels, before which so many pilgrims and palmers must have knelt. Behind

the altar is the chapel, in former days consecrated to the Holy Virgin, and that has retained, to this day, the name of Lady Chapel. In this is situated the little staircase conducting to a subterranean church ; that used to be the old baronial crypt, and that after the reformation was called the Laigh Kirk ; this melancholy and obscure colonnade was the scene of Rob Roy's mysterious warning to Francis Osbaldistone. Sir Walter Scott described it thus :—"Conceive an extensive range of low-browed, dark, and twilight vaults, such as are used for sepulchres in other countries, and had long been dedicated to the same purpose in this ; a portion of which was furnished with pews, and used as a church. The part of the vaults thus occupied, though capable of containing a congregation of many hundreds, bore a small proportion to the darker and more extensive caverns which yawned around what may be termed the inhabited space. In those waste regions of oblivion, dusky banners and tattered escutcheons indicated the graves of those who were once, doubtless, 'Princes of Israel.' Inscriptions which could only be read by the pains-taking antiquary, in language as obsolete as the act of devotional charity which they implored, invited the passers-by to pray for the souls of those whose bodies rested beneath."

This crypt is to-day deserted ; its aspect is perhaps therefore even more grim and mysterious than at the time of Sir Walter Scott's description. It is impossible to go through it without experiencing an inexpressible

feeling of sadness and horror creep over one ; there is an atmosphere of death in those funeral regions, where everything seems to remind us of the grave, and where every stone bears upon its face the mark of the remains of a being that cannot but remind us of the end of our short earthly career.

We went the round of those arches in as short a time as we could, and climbing up the worn-out steps, we found ourselves again in the inner church.

The Gothic churches exercise a power over the imagination that the Greek and Græco-Roman temples in vain have tried to equal. It is but too true that the Popes have employed, in building modern churches, the riches that the devotion inspired by the Gothic churches had given them. I observed this to Concha, and I added, " You must allow that the Gothic style of architecture is the true Christian style, and that, after all, the Roman and modern churches always put one in mind of the pagan temples."

Conchita, seating herself upon one of the benches of the choir, while I took my place by her side, said, " There is nothing so beautiful and that so much attracts our soul, and leads it towards prayer, as those old abbeys in which all is mystic and holy, lighted by the innumerable torches that burn constantly before the holy images that we worship, and that represent our earthly lives gradually burning in a flame of love and prayer that rises towards God in heaven. And those painted glass windows of our forefathers, through which the sun shone upon them, as the light of God

shone upon their minds through the teachings of the saints and martyrs painted upon them. Oh, such a church would be a fitting home for God, not such a Gothic anachronism as this. Here are the niches, but where are the saints? Who has substituted for the high altar, splendidly laden with shrines and reliquaries, this plain wood table, on which no longer is placed the real body of our Lord? This is indeed a Gothic church, but one that has long since been abandoned by the Deity and by His worshippers, and in which only the shadows of the past are visible."

"It is true, Conchita mia, this church seems more adapted to the dead that lie beneath its vaults, than for the living, who stare in mute astonishment at the relics of a faith that is not their own. One sees clearly that it was not built for the worship of her present attendants. Even now there is a service performed in it every Sunday, but it has no relation to the splendid ceremonies once performed beneath those arches, and for which it had been destined by its founders. The church is the same, but the religion has changed. Thus everything belonging to our spirit changes. All that is *immortal* must suffer certain changes, without which its progress would be impossible, for only what is purely material, only what time destroys and man can pull down, remains till the end in its primitive state. How different is the man of the nineteenth century compared with that man who built this church as a place in which to worship his God!

Each race has its civilisation and its religion, that

when it passes away, leaves traces of its existence upon the planet, for nothing is ever lost in the admirable economy of time.

Observe the Pyramids that were built thousands of years ago in order to commemorate the lives of men whose religion is totally ignored by us to-day, and yet there we have their temples and their altars just as they left them.

Each race leaves behind it the foot-prints of its civilisation, and by those we are able to arrive at the state of their progress. They are the only proofs that time has consented to leave us in its destructive and yet creative march through the centuries.

In a few centuries more perhaps—who knows?—another generation, more advanced and more enlightened, may contemplate these Christian churches, when even the nature of the divine Master that taught men the religion that inspired them to build them, may be very differently understood. For—

“God is God from the creation;
Truth alone is man’s salvation.
But the God that *now* we worship,
Soon shall be our God no more;
For the soul in its unfolding,
Evermore its thought re-moulding,
Learns more truly in its progress
How to love and to adore.”

“Thus you see that the truth of the present is but the truth of the
past,
But each phase is greater, and grander, and mightier than the
last;
That the past is ever prophetic of that which is yet to be,
And that God reveals His glory by slow and distinct degree.”

Conchita sighed, and a tear fell upon my hand. "I am sorry, dear Walter," she said, "that you should speak so lightly of the sublime religion to which it is our happiness to belong. Jesus established His doctrine for all eternity, and St Peter built His church, that will last as long as the world. If the pagan religions of antiquity have disappeared, and have been forgotten, it is because they were idolatrous, because they were false. But Christianity has been established by God himself, and therefore it must be an eternal religion."

"I do not want to argue with you, *amor mio*, if the ancient religions that you call idolatrous, were false or not, although I doubt very much that God in his justice would have allowed false doctrines to be preached and thought among his children, and, above all, that they should attain such a degree of success that Christianity itself has not yet, in nineteen centuries, been able to reach, for, without exaggeration, it is necessary that you should know that the Budhists, whom you, of course, believe to be all infidels, condemned to hell, number even to-day in their decline nearly four hundred millions—a cypher which the disciples of Christ are very far from reaching—and that the Brahmists, who profess, perhaps, the oldest existing religion in the world, count amongst their followers more than all the Catholics who acknowledge the Pope as sovereign pontifice put together; but one thing I swear to you, and that is, that if I could believe God to be capable of allowing

false doctrines to have such a success, and of sending all men who do not chance to hear of Christianity to hell, I would doubt of his justice, and even of his wisdom."

"Do you then believe, Walter, that the Budhists are right in believing in Brahm and Budha, and in denying Christ?"

"No, certainly not," I said, "but they do what they have been taught to do, the same as you believe in what the nuns have told you; they act according to their conscience, and, therefore, according to God's laws. If they worship Brahm it is because they know no better, or rather because they are not sufficiently advanced to be able to comprehend a more philosophical doctrine—they believe in Budha because their parents and masters believed before them in him, but, in spite of this, I am sure they will not be condemned for following the faith of their forefathers. Christians are very easily led to condemn the Indians and Hindoos, because they do not give up their faith at once, and adopt theirs, but they are very long before they can be got to change the least important of their ideas. Every man must act so as to please himself, according to his best knowledge, and if his conduct and belief are such as please his better nature, you may be sure that they are acceptable to his Creator in heaven; it is not man's fault that God did not make him an angel, and did not place him in heaven."

"God is just," she said, "but cannot allow a false

religion to take the place of the only true one. Your ideas may be very philosophical, but they are not Catholic. What would the nuns at Seville say if they could hear you? Surely they would think I had married Lucifer himself. Walter! Walter!" exclaimed the beautiful girl, her eyes full of tears, "if I did not love you so much I think I should hate you!"

I took her burning hand in mine, and said gently to her while I took her out of the church,—“Come, queridita Concha, those ideas that the nuns have given you are quite opposed to my philosophical and liberal spirit, but I will respect them as thine own. I do not want to contradict you to-day; only yesterday we were married, and what no man must put asunder, I am afraid discussion and differences of opinion will, if I do not take care. Come, let us go out of this church—the fresh air will do you good.”

“Oh Walter, is it possible that you want to deny the church that has made us man and wife? Do you want to deny the power of that divine religion that has given me the power of being able to call you mine?”

There was so much innocence, so much love, and so much sadness in those words pronounced by the mouth of one so much loved, that I could not but admire the purity of her faith, although I could not think with her.

I had faith, too, but I wanted belief.

We had just emerged from the cathedral, and the fresh air of the evening soon dissipated the black cloud that had veiled our happiness for a moment. We crossed the Bridge of Sighs and we entered the Necropolis. We walked through this city of the dead, arm in arm, but in utter silence. Our minds were too full of thought to speak, the recent conversation that Conchita had sustained with such force and resolution seemed to hang over us still, and when at last we arrived at the highest part of this hill, she let herself fall exhausted upon the pedestal of John Knox's monument. I could not but shudder at seeing the Catholic girl at the feet of the most zealous of the enemies of Rome.

CHAPTER III.

RELIGIOUS SCRUPLES.

THIS conversation, the first I had had with my youthful bride on religious subjects, made me extremely unhappy, for by it I saw clearly that Conchita's mind, so sweet and yielding in all other respects, refused, with the greatest determination, to accept the ideas which I had at that time, concerning this the most important of all earthly subjects.

This filled me with sorrow, as I have just said, for the reason that *I* also was inflexible in those days, having lately thought so much and so earnestly on the subject, that it seemed at last to form part of my very being.

Although the son of a Catholic family, bigoted and intolerant as they are only to be found in Protestant countries, where persecutions and continual religious discussions seem to impose upon them the duty of upholding the doctrines peculiar to their religion in the firmest and most inflexible spirit, my mind would not give its assent to believe in some of the mysterious and supernatural teachings of the Church of Rome as they were then explained to me.

In my earliest youth, all the care and affectionate

zeal of my parents to teach me their belief had only found in me an indifference that pained them more than I could then imagine. Like most children, during the first years of my life I occupied myself very little about religion; and I listened to the sermons of my elders and of the priests without lending much attention to them. At the age of twelve I was sent to a Catholic college in the north of England; and, before I left it, I began to use my reason in judging of the religion in which all who surrounded me seemed to have such blind faith.

We went to mass every morning before breakfast; and every afternoon we were present at vespers and benediction. Moreover, a day was not allowed to pass without a sermon or oration, the subject of which was but too often that of condemning the Protestant doctrines that, in spite of them, formed the religion of our mother-country, and impressing upon the students' hearts the truth of God's one only faith as taught in the Catholic Church.

This persistence could not but attract my attention; and I began to think that if the Catholic religion was the only true one, as they said, what was the use of preaching so much against the other faiths, and ridiculing their sectarians?

This idea soon took possession of my mind, and, as I was extremely impressionable, it soon took deep root in my heart. All my thoughts were directed from that moment to the search for proofs of the religion of my ancestors, only one scruple deterred

me, and that was the thought, whether I was quite justified in my desires to penetrate the mysteries that my forefathers, and my teachers, had so religiously respected and believed.

But, unfortunately, the peculiar bent of my mind, and my anxiety to discover the truth, made me but too soon overcome this difficulty, and I did not spare any pains to arrive at my object.

With this purpose, I began to read all the books that came in my way upon religious questions. I took particular interest in the history of the English Reformation, and in the causes that originated it. As I read, my mind naturally became more and more enlightened; and the more I read about this, the more I sympathised with the cause of the Reformers.

Soon I came to the conclusion that the Protestants were not wholly wrong after all, although I could not quite agree with their doctrines. But in spite of this objection, I thought them decidedly more liberal, and above all, more reasonable than their persecutors. This very persecution and constant opposition to their new ideas served to increase my growing aversion to the creed of the Papists.

If the Bible be really the word of God, I said to myself, why should it not be read and studied by all? How dare man forbid the words of the Deity from sounding all over the world? And at that time not all the Catholic theology could have answered this to my satisfaction.

I had at my command the whole of the college

library, and one day I determined to read the Bible for myself in plain English, and to see with my own eyes the truth of the word that had been the cause of so many disputes and so much bloodshed. But in so doing I not only received a satisfactory reason why this book should not be generally read, but also a great disappointment. The old Testament seemed to me to be cruel, barbarous, and even irrational and inhuman in its teachings. The New certainly seemed to me to be better adapted to our present state of civilisation, but, I had read just before Newton's great work and *La Mecanique Celeste* of La Place, and how childish and simple the Mosaic account of the creation seemed to me after those sublime truths! And yet they say it is the *word of God*,—can this be true? Can God do such mighty works, I said to myself, and speak of them in such a manner? It never occurred to me then, that at the time when this revelation was given, the human race was but comparatively young upon the earth, and that the truth, the grand mighty truth, would have been lost upon them, for as St Paul remarks, “’Tis a folly to give strong meat unto babes.” But in those days I did not think of all this.

My mind was in this unsettled state when I was taken away from the school and sent to the University of Oxford.

There I remained for two years, during which I ended by being convinced of the many discrepancies in the doctrines of the Church of Rome.

Not so much in the principal doctrines upon which our faith is based, as in those lesser dogmas that the Church insists in teaching with the articles of the creed.

I believed and acknowledged the truth of the doctrine of the one God, almighty, eternal, perfect, creator of all things. I believed, likewise, in the duty of loving this God above all things, and of obeying His laws; also in the necessity of loving our neighbour as ourselves; and I believed in the punishments and rewards of a future state. But I could not bring myself to believe in a God who sends His children to hell and for ever. I believed in the immortality of the soul, and therefore in a future state of existence, dependant upon the use we make of this, but necessarily of a more spiritual and fully developed condition.

“They tell us,” I said to myself, “that we should love our enemies and forgive them until seventy times seven. Ought we not, therefore, to suppose that God loves *His* enemies? And yet the fathers of the Church tell us plainly that if we do not love God, we shall go to hell for ever, for God either *cannot*, or will not, save those that do not love Him. But even if He were to forgive them, and repay their hatred with a love that would be really divine, would He punish them more than would be for their good? And can an eternal punishment be good for anyone?

“This we see plainly cannot be the case. An eternal punishment would be a useless punishment,

because the penitence that it would excite could not be carried out, and because the poor penitent could not come again upon the earth to correct the faults of his past existence. An eternal punishment would therefore be an utterly useless chastisement, and God could not establish anything useless. This doctrine may be a dogma of any church which teaches also that we shall have to suffer for an eternity if we do not believe in it; but can this Church, that professes to be the Church of truth, teach this, and at the same time insist in the doctrine of the supreme justice and mercy of God?"

I accepted the latter, and would not therefore believe in the truth of the former. I believed God to be infinitely better than the best of men, and I knew well that when man punishes, it is with the view of reforming the offender and teaching him a better course, whereas the punishment inflicted by the God of the churches, having for its end not the benefit, not the reformation, but the unceasing and eternal punishment of the sinner, can proceed only from the bitterest feelings of revenge, worthy only of the most malignant fiend, and therefore not of *my* God.

If God only loves those that are good, I said to myself, that is to say, those who love Him and do His will, he is in no way better than man. For we also love those that are good to us and believe in our word. But if we believe God to be perfect, we must also believe that He loves all His sons alike, good and

bad. Theologians tell us that we do wrong when we return evil for evil. Is it possible that God is right when He sends those He does not like to perdition and damnation? God, according to them, must be worse than the most wicked of men, for no man who had not the heart of a tiger could punish a son of his *for ever*; a human heart would burst before that, and yet God, who is divine, must do it if hell exists.

I have heard some priests say that God in his supreme knowledge knows the destiny of each of his sons, that is to say, that when he creates them, he destines them for heaven or for hell, as it strikes his fancy, or at least, in most cases, to suffer a long and painful ordeal in purgatory, before they have committed even the smallest fault. They also have told me, and this I believe is an article of our faith, that the children who die before they have been baptised, go to *limbo*, as if it were their fault to die so young, and God must have known, when he made them, that they would die without receiving the consecrated water. Now as by far the greater number of men die without being baptised, it follows that limbo must be a much larger place than heaven, purgatory, and hell put together.

Some even tell us that the wicked are not sons of God but of the devil; but if such be the case, why do they tell them to pray, saying, '*Our Father, forgive us our sins.*' But, is not God the father of all? Has He not made us? and if we be all His children, is it possible that He can hate us even though we prove to

be wicked? If God hate the sinner, would the sinner be wrong in hating God? Surely not. God cannot expect us to be better towards Him than He is toward us.

If we had enough power, should we not save the whole human race? No good man can be wicked enough to wish His enemies to suffer for ever; His wrath would be forgotten in time, and He would then forgive. This would be according to the laws of the human heart, planted therein by the Divine power. Can that Divine power contradict itself?

And yet, we can only judge the Deity according to our human ideas of right and wrong, we can only arrive at a precise knowledge of God's nature by studying His works, and by a knowledge of the laws that govern the universe. According, therefore, to man's standard of goodness and justice, God should punish the sins of His children to their full extent but no more; so as man cannot commit an eternal sin, an eternal punishment would be unjust and out of place; the sin of a moment, however inexcusable, cannot merit an eternal punishment. And even supposing the man to sin during his whole life, what is even that compared to eternity? An instant is as long a space of eternity as fifty years, or even a hundred, for in eternity there is no time.

Supposing, therefore, that God, after a certain adequate chastisement, pardon the sinner, forgive him, and that one day at last we shall all meet together in heaven; if such is the case, what was the use of being

saved by Jesus of Nazareth, as taught in the creeds of Catholic and Protestant churches? If God the Father saves everybody, what was the use of God the Son's coming to the world and suffering for our sakes?

This is, nevertheless, the fundamental doctrine upon which Christianity is based, unjust and inhuman as it may seem, for if God be indeed better than man (and being his maker, He ought to be superior to him in everything) He should not punish him more than it would be good for him, and at least He should make all, as they have a right to be, happy for evermore, and this of His own accord, for a father should not wait for somebody else to come and buy the freedom of his sons, he ought to give it to them of his own free will.

The church even tells us that there is only salvation through Jesus, as the author of the Acts of the Apostles says, '*there is only salvation in Him*' (iv. 12), and Christ himself said, according to St John, (xiv. 6), '*No man cometh to the Father excepting through me.*' This is a dogma of the church, and I suppose I am wrong in discussing it, but its truth, and at all events its justice, seem to me to be doubtful. If those words were ever said, is it not more probable that they have been badly understood? Christ could not mean such an unjust law to be one of the great and admirable laws established by the universal Father.

Thus ran my thoughts, I tried to defend the

doctrines of my church, to prove them by reasoning and investigation, by comparing them with the laws that we know to be true, and by the cases that I had before my eyes, but instead of proving their truth, I invariably arrived at the conclusion that they were all wrong and unworthy of God. It was impossible ; I could form, to myself, too perfect and sublime an idea of the nature of the Deity, and the fact is that the more I studied His works, the greater He appeared to me, and that the more I read His word, the more it seemed to contradict His greatness.

Sometimes my thoughts ran in another direction, and I used to say to myself, We are told that we should be thankful for our existence, and that this obligation is general and extends to all men. And yet, was not God very unjust when He made some of us rich and powerful, and others poor, a few wise and happy, and the greater part ignorant and miserable. Life cannot be a blessing for those who are not happy, and as the greater part are far from being so, life seems to me to be anything but a thing one should be thankful for. It may be true that we must all go *through the mill*, but some seem to me to go through it with perfect ease and without the least trouble, while by far the greater part pass their whole lives hoping for something which they never get ; for them, life cannot be said to be a blessing.

This the Church tries to make us forget, by telling us that this is not the true life, and that all we wish for here, we shall get on the other side of the

grave, if we obey her commands and follow her rules. But she does not explain the why, nor the wherefore. And if we do not obey her precepts, if we happen never to have heard of them, then we go to hell, to suffer for ever for the hardships of this life, and for our ignorance or disobedience of one of the articles of the Church. Under those circumstances it seems to me that it is almost impossible to be thankful to God for such an existence, that depends so little upon His mercy, or even upon His justice.

Not that I disbelieve in a future life. I do believe most assuredly in one, but I cannot bring myself to think that this can be one of eternal suffering and of everlasting sorrow, even for the worst of sinners.

This life is so short, so very short, so imperfect, the world is so frivolous and full of temptations, and we are so weak and so ignorant of our own good, that it cannot be our fault if we sin. The only sin can be ignorance—ignorance of our future state, and of the things most conducive to make that future a happy and a holy one. What blasphemy it would seem against the justice of any being to charge him with entertaining infinite wrath against creatures to whom he has given existence, because they are ignorant, he not having given them the knowledge, or the impulse, or disposition, or power to acquire the knowledge of the best way in which they can use the things provided for them. Yet this is what they tell me to believe in with respect to God. It seems to me that if we

sin, it is God alone who is to blame, according to this doctrine.

These thoughts may seem irreligious, and yet they were dictated to me at the time by my great faith in the love, justice, and mercy of God, and by my great and intense desire to investigate the truth of my faith. To this it may be objected, it is true, that God can make men as He likes, and that He can give them good or bad qualities as He chooses. This may be true, but the God that made the human heart would seem to me to be lowering Himself by putting such different and contradictory sentiments in His different children, and if this were true, ought we, the poor tools of his power and caprice, to suffer for this unjust proceeding? It seems to me that there must be a law, of which we are still ignorant, by which the immense difference that undoubtedly exists between the mental capacity of one man and another, and the position in which each of them is placed, is explained, and by which the justice of the Creator in so making and placing them is vindicated and established without even the shadow of a doubt.

But as I have before remarked, men will rather make the Creator appear unjust and unwise than declare themselves ignorant of the laws which they are not even yet sufficiently advanced to be able to comprehend.

In this I have a firm conviction; otherwise, if this life and the prospects of our future existence and welfare were such as the Church tells us, God would

be either unjust, unmerciful, unkind, unwise, or powerless.

Once it passed through my mind that the secret of all was, that God had not the power that we generally ascribe to Him, and that after making man as good as He could, He found Himself baffled, as it were, by His own creation, that He would gladly save the whole race if He could, but that it was out of His power to do so, and that this salvation must depend upon the man himself.

Once I entertained this idea, once only, and then but for a moment, for the next I looked at the radiant face of the sun, and I was obliged to acknowledge that the Being who had made that orbit of light and of life must at the same time be all-powerful and all-merciful.

Some one suggested to me that God having made man free, could not control his free-will, and could not be responsible for his conduct.

To this I answered, "You forget that man, being placed under certain conditions, is obliged to accommodate his conduct to those conditions. When man first comes into the world he is but a weak, ignorant, and innocent child, he can therefore only know what is taught him by his parents and masters, and if they are wicked, and teach him their ways, how can he help doing like them? The first impressions are never lost or forgotten, and bad example is the worst of temptations. If He had placed all men under the same disadvantages, and given them all the

same temptations, I should be able to understand His intentions, however unjust those may seem, but as some have more temptations than others, it is not extraordinary that some sin more than others. This confirms my belief in the existence of a law that can account for those differences of position and of character. But according to you, God requires of them all an obedience which, by your deification of Christ, you admit could not be rendered by mere man, however perfect, however free from temptation. He condemns them therefore to unspeakable tortures and torments for ever more. That is, having made them finite and imperfect, He condemns them for not being perfect and infinite like Himself, and would only be propitiated in their favour by the blood and agony of the only innocent one, the only one who had never offended Him in His life, His Son. So that, after all, men have nothing to do with their own salvation. They must, in order to be saved, independently of being good, receive the holy waters of baptism to save them from Adam's never forgotten sin, and believe in Christ, besides going to confession once a month, and paying no end of money to the Church. All this and a great deal more is required in order to be perfect, and I must say in truth, it has nothing to do with what we in the world would consider good and praiseworthy. A savage may be good, but he can never enter heaven, because he has never been baptized, and has never even heard of Christ. However good we may be, however constantly we may resist temptation,

we cannot be saved unless we receive absolution for our few sins from some priest of Rome. But as by far the greater part of men die without receiving absolution from Rome, God cannot pardon them, and they must all go to hell. This seems to me blasphemous, this is what I protest against. This unjust doctrine that takes away from men all the power they have to gain their own salvation. And yet it is the fundamental dogma of my own church, the church of my fathers."

Another of the doctrines that so much displeased me, and that I found in all the books of the church, was that of the personality of the Devil, the Spirit of Evil, Satan, from whom the church derives so much utility, frightening men with him in order to make them obey her commands.

I could not but ask myself, "Does such a being really exist?"

If he exists, who made him? God, for He is the only creator we know of. But is it probable that God would make a being with as great a power as Himself? —(for the power that is generally attributed to the devil is almost unlimited; it seems he can tempt men even against the wish of God). But if the devil has so great a power over humanity, why do they tell us that God is All-mighty?

How could God, who is so good, create a being so wicked?

God could not, therefore, have made the devil, for

where would then be his justice, his wisdom, and his knowledge?

And yet if God did not make the devil he must have made himself. How could this be? I am at a loss to say, but at all events God cannot be the only creator if such is the case.

There is a tradition that tells us that the devil was in the beginning an angel, Luzbel, if I remember right, whose overweening pride induced him to endeavour to make himself a God, but who only succeeded in making himself a devil; but if this fable was not a mere invention, and did in reality take place, God must have allowed him to become such, for otherwise it would seem as if something could take place against God's will, and we are told he is omnipotent. Moreover, as a sin presupposes a temptation, whatever this may be, *what* or *who* tempted this holy angel, so that he sinned? In this case it is impossible to attribute the cause to the devil, so we are led to suppose that even in heaven there are temptations, that sin and strife can enter even there, where love and peace are supposed to reign, and that even the angels of the Lord *are not perfect*.

If an angel sinned, I said to myself, without there being a devil to tempt him, can we not also sin without a devil being in the case? The existence of such a being is, therefore, not necessarily to be inferred from the evil there is upon earth, for evil must have existed in heaven even before an angel became 'a devil.'

The Bible tells us that in heaven all are holy—‘only those that are perfect can see the kingdom of God,’ but this cannot be true if an angel could be there who was so wicked as to prove the devil himself.

Even admitting the devil to be a rebellious angel that fell, he was not less an angel for all that, and he sinned, so that Adam’s sin loses its originality.”

That sin committed, God knows when, by our great forefather Adam, has always struck me as a dogma of the most extraordinary nature. It seemed to me so cruel and so unlike God’s wisdom and justice to make the whole race suffer for the sin of one man, of whom, moreover, nobody knows when or where he lived, since the discoveries of science have proved man to have been on the earth for long ages previous to the Mosaic calculations.

Why should we suffer, I often thought, for the sins of another man? But the more deeply I went into this doctrine the more and more I doubted its truth. “Would it be more improper and ridiculous to attribute my sins to Adam than his to me?” I exclaimed. “If God loved Adam and was at the same time almighty, why did He allow the devil to tempt him? If He could not prevent it, it must have been either because He did not love him or because He wanted the power to do so.” So, either one way or the other, it seemed to me to be a most transparent contradiction of God’s qualities.

Adam sinned, but why did he sin? Surely

because, in his weakness, he could not resist the temptations that surrounded him. So that it was not his fault if God had made him so imperfect and so weak that he fell at the very first temptation. God's crowning work! Man, was not, therefore, as good and perfect as He meant him to be, and when, after making man, "He saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good," (Gen. i. 31.) He little expected that the very first thing that this man of His own making, made even after His own image (Gen. i. 26) would do, would be to sin against His laws. "And it repented the Lord that He had made man on earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." (Gen. vi. 6.) Yet God must have known this, and we must, on the other hand, remember that Adam did not know right from wrong, until after eating the forbidden fruit, so that the fault still lies with God himself.

If Adam sinned without an *hereditary sin*, why should we suppose that our sins proceed from that *original sin*, as the church calls it. It seems to me too unjust of God to make us suffer for the sins of the progenitor of the race. Can it be possible that God loves us when He treats us in such a way? But the Bible itself tells us plainly that God himself tempts His own children, for do we not say daily, 'Lead us not into temptation,' as Christ recommended us to pray? (Matt. vi. 13). And did not 'the Lord say unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth

God and escheweth evil. And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest me against him, to destroy him without cause.' (Job ii. 3). And again, 'the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created' (Gen. vi. 7). And, moreover, did not the Lord tempt Abraham? for the Bible tells us that 'it came to pass, after these things, that God did tempt Abraham' (Gen. xxii. 1).

This is beyond doubt. The Word of God cannot be mistaken, although He once 'greatly deceived this people' (Jer. iv. 10), and 'sent them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie' (2 Thess. ii. 11). But what can we expect from a God of whom we read in His own infallible Word, 'Now, therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all those thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee' (1 Kings. xxii. 23); 'Then God sent an evil spirit' (Judges ix. 23); 'And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet' (Ezek. xix. 9); 'For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation' (Ex. xx. 5); 'Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth evil and good' (Lam. iii. 35); 'Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you' (Jer. xviii. 11); 'I make peace and create evil: I, the Lord, do all these things' (Is. xlv. 7); 'Therefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live' (Ezek. xx. 25); 'He

hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts' (John xii. 40); 'For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour' (Josh. xi. 20); 'I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them' (Jer. xiii. 14); 'And thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee: thine eye shall have no pity upon them' (Deut. vii. 16); 'Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling' (1 Sam. xv. 2, 3); 'Because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even He smote of the people fifty thousand and three score and ten men' (1 Sam. vi. 19); 'The Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them . . . and they died' (Josh. x. 11); 'The Lord God is a consuming fire' (Deut. iv. 24); 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel' (Num. xxv. 4); 'For ye have kindled a fire in mine anger which shall burn for ever' (Jer. xvii. 4); 'And the Lord met him, and sought to kill him' (Ex. iv. 24); 'And He (God) said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering' (Jer. xxii. 2); 'Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword

by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour' (Ex. xxxii. 27); 'But all the women children that have not known a man, keep alive for yourselves' (Num. xxxi. 18); 'Lo, Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab . . . And the Lord said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel' (2 Kings x. 11, 30)."

Such are a few of the innumerable verses of the Bible in which the character of Jehovah, King and God of the Jews, is described. I have copied them without note or comment, so that they may carry their weight solely upon themselves. They seem to me to be enough proof against the justice, mercy, wisdom, and almighty power of the God of the Jews. And yet this is the God we are told to worship as the God of the Universe! whom Christ would teach us to love and to address as *Our Father*, the universal Father and Giver of all good, who maketh His sun to shine on all alike! They may tell us that Christ taught a very different doctrine when He came; but did He not also say, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. x. 34)? and in another place, "I am come to send fire on the earth" (Luke xii. 49)? Moreover, Christ did not put an end to the ancient

law. "I come not to destroy the law," He said. Thus we see that the God of the churches is warlike (Ex. xv. 3); changeable (Gen. vi. 6); powerless (Judges i. 19); unjust and partial (Ex. xx. 5); an author of evil (Lam. iii. 38); cruel (Jer. xiii. 14); ferocious (1 Sam. vi. 19); angry (Jer. xvii. 4); a liar (2 Thess. ii. 11)—in one word, a very Demon!

"Is it possible," I exclaimed, when I had finished reading the Word of God, in which I saw for the first time its true nature proved by His own acts and words, "is it possible that the men of the nineteenth century can believe in such a Deity, and kneel every day and worship such a demon? and all for fear of a devil and a hell that, I am sure, cannot be worse than God Himself and what His heaven must be. Is it possible," I repeated to myself, "that grown-up men can be so frightened with the idea of a bogie, as to worship such a God as the one that the Bible presents to us?"

And this at a time when so many new discoveries are every day bringing to our knowledge the wonders of the universe—just now, when the sublime laws of the Creator are being so clearly taught to us, and when our ideas of God ought to be greater and holier than ever. For the instruments discovered by Galileo and Leuwenhoeck have shown us more of the glorious works of God than all the Bibles, Eddas and Vedas of antiquity have ever done, and than all the theology of the churches will ever teach us.

Yes; to-day the telescope and the microscope open

to us a wider and a more extensive region of speculation, and carry our thoughts much more into the sphere of God than even Jesus of Nazareth was able to do on account of our ignorance, which was a consequence of the need of these aids to knowledge, as the time had not yet dawned for their invention ; and therefore it would have been premature had He then spoken of the marvels of the universe as we now behold them, or else why did He say : “ I have other things to tell you, but you cannot hear them NOW ? ”

Such was the train of thought that carried me out of the Church of Rome. I sometimes asked myself if others had had the same scruples. Of this I was soon convinced. I found that several of my college companions had the same views, but they either did not care to speculate upon them, or they were afraid of the consequences, and therefore did not dare to go too far into the subject.

I studied the works of those who with the best reasons had protested against the Church of Rome. Luther, Calvin, Voltaire, Rousseau, St Lambert, Comte, Tom Paine, Theodore Parker, Boulanger, Dupuis, Strauss, Renan, etc., and in those books I found an exact repetition of my doubts and scruples.

Sometimes when I read those books that the world has talked so much against, I could not but say to myself, “ Can it be possible that I am going to abandon the religion of my parents ? ” This painful thought gave me the idea of going back, but it was too late ; the dogmas of the Church appeared to me

insufferable, and all their doctrines pernicious and unjust. Little by little I had walked out of the Church. I had forgotten the obedience that the Church of Rome imposes upon her children, and now my mind had expanded too much to be able to return again through the narrow door of the Church that appeared to me almost to shut out the light of heaven. If the priests had only known what was passing in my mind, surely they would have called me an apostate. "This is a hard word, I thought, but was it not applied by the Jews to Jesus only a thousand years ago? and in spite of them His apostasy has become a great religion? But can this be called a heresy, as Rome most assuredly would call it, when I only seek to discover the way of establishing the direct communication with God that Catholicism does not establish by any means? Can one displease God when one is searching for the best way of arriving nearer to Him? Before I was a Catholic, and I was true to my faith; but now I am also true to that faith, and yet I cannot call myself a Catholic according to the Church, and be one in outward appearance and yet dissent in my heart. I could cheat the world, but I could not cheat myself.

I wanted to be still considered a Catholic, but I knew the innumerable faults of Catholic dogmas, and I could not believe in them. I could not live constantly hiding from my heart the thoughts of my mind; I wanted to be still a Catholic because it was the religion of my fathers. And religion, I thought,

is not a bond between men, but one that is to bind the creature to its Creator. What has the world to do with this sacred tie? Which would be more agreeable to God, an outer appearance of hereditary faith, at which I laugh in the bottom of my heart, or a true faith, based on firm belief and conviction, and that springs from the impartial study of the works of the Creator?

What matters what I seem to be? What I *am* is what God will approve or condemn, and most assuredly He will not approve of my doubt and incertitude. And, after all, these words, "*the religion of my fathers*," can be applied to all faiths. This cannot be said as a proof of its truth. Surely our fathers may have lived quite easily believing in a mistaken faith, and even what may have been a truth to them must not, therefore, necessarily be a truth for us. In my grandfather's time it was thought an impossibility for a steamer to cross the Atlantic; it was even proved on scientific principles, and sustained by the wisest of men, and yet to-day they cross it in every direction. Truths can only be relative and dependent upon the state of *progression* of the individual who receives them. This is one of the laws of progress. Why should not religious truths be also dependent upon the advancement of the individual mind that is to receive them? The Jews converted by the apostles abandoned the religion of their fathers and were right. God himself, we are told, established the religion taught by Moses, and He

himself supplanted it after a time for that taught by Jesus, and yet both are said to be equally true, although they seem to contradict each other almost in every point.

They tell me that I have had the *immense happiness* of being brought up in the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church ; it might be a great blessing, no doubt, according to their ideas ; but as all other communions would say the same to me if I belonged to their religion, it seems to me that I must choose for myself. That I have been brought up in the Catholic Church cannot be a proof of the truth of its doctrine.

But which *is* the true religion ? Which of the Christian churches is the true one ? Every one of them pretends to be the religion that Jesus taught in Judea so many hundred years ago, and yet does any one of them all teach the pure, unostentatious truths as they were first preached by Him ?

The Churches of Rome, London, Berlin, and St. Petersburg, each call themselves the only Christian Church, although they teach doctrines so adorned that they are quite opposed to those of Christ.

It seems to me that if He were to come again upon earth, the first thing he would do would be to preach against modern Christianity.

For where did Jesus say that he was God ?

If Christ had been God, would he have said, ‘ If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true ? ’ (St John v. 31.) Was Christ the God Almighty when

he said, ‘ I can, of mine own self, do nothing ? ’ (St John v. 30.)

Was Jesus the God omniscient when he said, concerning the day of judgment, “ Of that day, and of that hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father ? ” (Mark xiii. 32.)

Was Christ the God omnipresent when he said, “ I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God ? ” (John xx. 17.) Can any one ascend to himself, and can any one be his own god ?

Was Jesus the God all-good, when he reproved the rich man for calling him good, saying, “ Why callest thou me good ? there is none good but one, that is God ? ” (Mark x. 18.)

Was Christ equal with God when he said plainly, “ My Father is greater than I ? ” (St John xiv. 28.)

Where did Jesus say that we should worship him ?

Where did Jesus say that the Holy Ghost was God himself ?

Where did Jesus say that we should worship the Virgin and the angels, and even the saints ?

Where did Jesus say that we should worship images ?

Where did Christ say that the Jewish law was false ?

How could Christ have believed that St Peter and his successors were saints and holy, when he said to him, “ Get thee behind me Satan ; thou art an offence unto

me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men?" (St Matthew xvi. 23.)

How could St Peter have been infallible when he denied his master three times? (St Luke xxii.)

When did Christ teach the doctrine of the Trinity?

When did Jesus teach as the church does now the sanctity of particular days?

Where did Christ say that he only came to save those that were good; did he not say rather that he came to save those that had need of him?

Can, therefore, the modern churches have any relation with Christ and his teachings, when they preach doctrines that are so opposed to those he taught when on earth?

Modern discoveries make us doubt of the truth of many statements contained in the Bible. Without some key to reconcile its contradictions, we find it impossible to believe in a book that tells us that the sun goes round the earth, and the chief doctrine of whose interpreters is, that three is equal to one, and one is equal to three. This is not the age for superstitions and bad mathematics. The bishops of the different Christian sects know this, but they can only tell us that science and religion have nothing to do with each other, and that mathematics that contradict the Bible must necessarily be wrong.

Yet a truth is a truth wherever we may find it. The church may make a Galileo recant his words, but it cannot contradict the fact that the earth goes

round the sun, although the Bible may say that it does not.

But, if the church cannot prove to us that science is wrong, why does it stand against its truth? For whom should we believe—he who can prove his doctrines to our understanding, or he who can only declare them to be *mysteries of faith*?

If the doctrines of the church of Rome be true, what is the use of making them into dogmas? Everybody believes that two and two make four, without its being necessary to add that his salvation depends upon his believing it.

They tell us that we should not trust in men's doctrines, but that we should obey only those that come from God, and then they preach that men should obey, in everything, the orders of the Pope. Is not this obeying a man? It is true that the church has made the Pope infallible, but to believe this, we must not only forget the past history of the Popes, but forget also that he is a man, and that Christ never told us that St Peter was infallible, much less his successors.

The church seems to me to take too much upon itself; it undoubtedly forgets that we are no longer in the fifteenth century, that men have lost all fear of the devil and his hell, as we can too clearly see, if we study the events that have taken place during the last two hundred years, in the very heart of Europe, where Rome used to rule supreme, once upon a time. The truth is, man has outgrown, or is fast outgrowing

this church, and yet Rome pretends still, in spite of everything, that she can pardon and absolve sins, and that her masses can release a soul from purgatory.

If this be true, God cannot possibly be all-powerful and unerring in His judgments, for He is made to change His plans, according to the decision of the Pope, and because any priest can send a soul straight into heaven, although He destined it for purgatory or even hell. According to this doctrine, the church and its priests have more power than God himself.

It seems to me impossible that a handful of gold can change the destiny of any being. If the church really have the power she pretends to have over man's future destiny, she should save every one according to their deeds, and not according to their money. Perhaps I think wrongly about all these things, but I judge others by myself, and I, if I had enough power, I would make everyone happy for evermore. I should certainly accept the money they would choose to give me, but I should not make this unjust payment, the condition upon which this salvation depended.

And after all, if after getting over all these difficulties, if after disappointing one's expectant heirs, and leaving no end of money to the Church to obtain one's salvation, one at last gets into the heaven the Church takes such pains in describing to us; can one possibly be happy in such a place when one knows that so many of our fellow-creatures are suffering in hell for ever? It may be, as St Augustin says, that the

chief pleasure of the angels is the contemplation of the endless pains and miseries of the damned that are suffering before them. But if they find *that* a pleasure, those angels must certainly have hearts very different from ours. What can we think of the happiness to be found in a heaven where—

‘ The godly wife conceives no grief,
Nor can she shed a tear,
For the sad fate of her mate,
When she his doom doth hear.

‘ He that was erst a husband pierc’d
With sense of wife’s distress,
Whose tender heart did bear a part
Of all her grievances,
Shall mourn no more, as heretofore,
Because of her ill plight,
Although he see her now to be
A damn’d, forsaken wight.’ ”*

Such were the thoughts that passed through my agitated mind, and such was the consequence of the half-clerical, half-university education I had received.

Entertaining such doubts, I could not belong any more to the church of my fathers, and yet when I studied the doctrines of the Church of England, and when I criticised them with equal liberality, I must confess that they seemed to me to be exceedingly alike. The form was certainly another, but the basis of both was the same. Having found the one false, I could not but find the other equally so.

In the University of Oxford I had found two men

* “ The Day of Doom.” By the Rev. M. Wigglesworth of Malden, New England.

that, like myself, had protested against the Church of Rome, to which they both formerly belonged. This naturally brought us constantly together.

The one was Dr John Gray, the well known and much appreciated master of natural philosophy. The other was a student of my own age, by name Francis Harrington.

Those two men had been my most intimate friends during my two terms in the university, but I had quite lost sight of them since my father's death, that forced me to abandon my studies, and called me to the side of my disconsolate mother.

Both of them, strange to say, had arrived at the same conclusion, although by very different routes. When I told them of my doubts respecting the Church of Rome, and when I confided to them my scruples, they both assured me that they also felt the same doubts and scruples, and entertained ideas similar to my own.

But, in spite of this similarity of ideas, there was something in their way of viewing religion, and in their respective reasons for protesting against Catholicism that did not please me at all.

The doctor, a man of the most profound knowledge and learning, thought that there was nothing in the world of so much importance as science, and seeing that the Christian religion was established upon the most unscientific basis, and that the Church denied several of the established laws of nature, and moreover, observing that her priests were for the most

part men of but little learning, and who had more faith in their own dogmas than in scientific investigations, abandoned the Church of Rome, and with that all other religions, thinking them all equally ignorant and untrue. He had become what the world would call an atheist. That is to say, that finding himself unable to discover a religion that would describe to him the Supreme Being, such as science acknowledges He must be, and such as he imagined He might be, he had abandoned all religion, and ended by denying the existence of any God whatever. He attributed the creation to certain causes and laws by means of which the ceaseless production of plants, animals, men, and all other living creatures was due to the fortuitous concourse of atoms.

This doctrine could not fill my heart. If I protested against the abuses and dogmas of Rome, it was solely because I did not find the idea that this religion gives us of the Supreme Creator adequate to the magnitude and grandeur of the universe created. I doubted the truth of Catholicism because this religion contradicted the greatness, power, and justice that I imagined Him to possess, but not because of this was I going to doubt altogether the existence of a God.

As for Francis Harrington, accustomed, since his father's death, to live among Protestants, he had grown, by slow degrees, to think like them. He dedicated himself solely to the study of the Bible, that his guardian told him to be the word of God, and from this study he, of course, derived that the Church of

Rome was all wrong as to her doctrine, and that the Christianity of the Catholics was very different from that taught by Jesus in Jerusalem ; so he abandoned the old faith and turned Protestant, joining the reformed church of England, in which he soon became one of its ministers.

His ideas, of course, did not agree with mine ; I did not doubt the truth of the Roman Church, because its doctrines were different from those established by the first Christians, but because its dogmas and rites were too narrow for my enquiring mind, and for my exalted idea of God.

So although these two men had protested against the church as I did, their motives for so doing were so different from mine, that their solutions could not satisfy me.

I was too much of a philosopher, and had too much heart to become an atheist, and had not enough faith in the infallibility of the Bible to join any of the reformed churches. So that I did not abandon completely the old faith of my forefathers ; for not finding any religion that agreed better with my peculiar ideas, I thought it better to be still a Roman Catholic at least to my family, although my Christianity was very unorthodox and very different from that preached in the churches. Thus was I situated when la Señora de Vargas, asked me if I belonged to the Church of England. I answered her, that my family were all Catholics, and that their religion was also my faith.

And this was but the truth ; to what other religion could I say I belonged ?

Until that time, I had not found anybody with whom I could speculate upon the subject dearest to my heart. I always expected to marry a woman who participated in my ideas, or to whom I could, at least, confide my doubts, and the peculiar views upon which my moral existence was based ; but one day I saw Conchita Vargas in the old convent in Catholic Spain, and I forgot all my intentions, all my scruples, and even the moral ideal of a woman for which I had so often sighed. Love made me sacrifice my religious ideas to his all-powerful passion.

But now that I at last possessed the object so well loved, now that I could call my wife the angel of beauty and purity, that had made me forget so much, I began to see plainly the reality of what I judged to be my folly, my unpardonable mistake.

“ Great God ! I exclaimed, what is going to become of me, obliged to live by the side of a devout and narrow-minded girl, accustomed only to dress images in a convent. Why have I married such a woman ! Why, oh my God, have I sacrificed my most holy sentiments to a passion that I shall so soon forget ? ”

I was so vexed with the language used by Conchita in the cathedral, that I gave up all hope, at once, of ever convincing her of the truth, and of making her change the doctrines that she held so much at heart. I accused myself of not having foreseen the consequences of marrying a girl out of a convent, who

only could entertain the narrow-minded ideas of the inhabitants of the cloisters.

And now that my readers are aware of the origin of my religious views, they will see how insufferable must have appeared to me, the idea of living out my days with a being who professed doctrines that were so hateful at that moment to me.

I was submerged in these vexatious and melancholy thoughts, when Paula, Conchita's maid, came to announce that her mistress was waiting for me in her dressing room.

I went into this room that leads from the drawing-room, with my heart torn by those bitter thoughts ; but no sooner had I entered the apartment, than all my agonies of fear and all my serious scruples were set to flight as the torments of a nightmare are dissipated by the brilliant rays of the rising sun.

I beheld before me my youthful bride, beautiful as I had never before seen her, and looking so radiantly happy, as to make my own heart beat with joy.

Conchita was waiting for me to enter into our nuptial chamber ; and I, forgetting everything that had passed through my mind for the last hour, threw myself at her feet, blinded again by love.

CHAPTER IV.

DUMBARTON.

THE following day was the 4th of July, and a bright sun illuminated our windows since the early morning.

“What a splendid day!” exclaimed Conchita, as she came into the breakfast room, where I had been reading the *Times*. “It looks as if the sun itself came to bless and brighten our union.” Saying this, she opened the window that looked upon George Square, and went out upon the balcony, where I soon joined her, and where we remained for a few seconds, my arm around her, breathing the fresh air of the morning. All of a sudden, Conchita, gliding from my arms, exclaimed, blushing, “Walter! Walter! what are you doing? Don’t you see that everybody is looking at us from the Square? Did you ever see such a thing? To embrace me thus, before the solemn and serious Scotchmen! They will assuredly take us for a couple of lovers.”

“They will only take us for what we are then, my own sweet love. Am I not your husband, and are you not my wife, my darling wife?”

“Ah! it is true,” murmured the beautiful girl, while her superb black eyes bent down full of tears, and her golden locks floated round her face.

“Are you sorry for it?” I said, taking her hand in mine; “are you sorry because you can call me thine? Sorry that now I am yours, that I live for you, feel for you?——Oh! embrace me, Conchita, embrace me, wife of my heart, for at this moment I am your mother, father, brother——your lover——yes! your passionate lover. Come to my arms! and what does it matter if even the whole world were to be witness to our love? Are we not one?——one according to man’s laws, and one according to God’s laws? Let them stare at us, I am sure that if they knew our love, and saw our hearts, their smiles would change into jealous frowns, and their mockery into envious sighs.”

Conchita took my arm, and, coming into the apartment, she threw herself on the sofa, when she said, after a moment’s hesitation, “This is too much happiness; I am too happy now; and I am afraid that this happiness will soon change into sorrow. It is so good to be loved by thee, that eternity would scarcely be long enough for me to enjoy our love: and yet you will forget this love so soon!——this passion that to-day fills our hearts! It is so sweet to love and to be loved, that this melody of life should last an eternity without the heart being fatigued by this passion.”

“And do you believe, Conchita, that my heart can ever tire of loving you? No; remember this is a law of the human heart, my pet, that love creates love; it augments it; it developes it. The only change that it can undergo now is, that it will become calmer;

but even if less vehement, it will be all the more soothing and the sweeter. The secret of loving is, to occupy oneself constantly with the object loved—to live always together. To love, is to die to oneself: true love consists in living the one for the other. This passion, carried to its highest pitch, succeeds in making one being out of two. Such a love can last an eternity, an eternity of love, happiness, and felicity. For, without this, the union that was so agreeable at first becomes indifferent, perhaps hard and galling. Yes, Conchita; mutual affection is the essence of matrimonial union; and from the moment that this affection ceases, marriage is but a vain word.”

“And do you believe, then, that we shall always be as happy as we are at the present moment?”

“Of course,” I answered her. “A celebrated French author, Pierre Leroux, if I remember rightly, said, that ‘heaven—the true heaven—was to be found in the conjugal life, such as that life used to be in the patriarchal times. Man cannot live for ever alone; he wants a companion that can partake of his pleasures, and can console him in his sorrows.’ Adam needed Eve to be completely happy, even in Paradise.”

“I am glad, Walter, that you should think so. When I was but a young girl in the convent, I used to say to myself, ‘This cannot be the true life that God meant us to live upon earth. These holy women around me seem happy; but I am sure that even they feel that something is wanting in their existence to make them completely so.’ I had not yet felt the

love that to-day fills my life, and causes my felicity, but I guessed at its effects ; for they are dreamt of even in the cloisters.

“The nuns painted to me the sins of the world, but at the same time they said to me, ‘Concha, you will soon attain a marriageable age, and when you least expect it, your mother will come to take you away from the convent. Once in the world you will find yourself alone and without real friends, for there all must be selfish, if they want to live according to the established customs. But remember that here in this sacred place all love you. Come to us then.’ I cried, and was unhappy when the thought of leaving the convent was suggested to me. The church and my cell had been till then all the world to me, and I repeatedly told the superior that I would never leave them, and that when I arrived at the proper age, I would take the veil, and would become one of them. They always smiled at this, and said that I ought to see the world before becoming a nun. ‘The world is not wicked in itself, and there is a great deal that is good in it.’ Love, they also told me, is, like all the passions inspired and felt by men, one that can elevate a soul to the highest virtues, or sink it into the worst of crimes. In spite of this, like all that comes from heaven, it is a superior sentiment, destined eventually to elevate the creature to the Creator, as the Virgin’s love and tenderness sanctified her holy person in the eyes of God.’ ‘My daughter,’ added the lady abbess, ‘if you ever feel such a love, resist it if the person

that inspires it cannot become your husband, and even if he asks your hand, do not grant it to him if you are not sure that he also loves you.' I then made up my mind that I would love my husband with all my heart, with all my soul, or that I would never marry. 'If ever I find such a man,' I said to myself, 'I would either die or become his wife. Yes, I will marry a man whose elevated soul will be able to help me and sustain me. I will help him, but he must also help me, and let me lean on him. He must have a loving and tender spirit, that will never get tired of loving me, one whom I shall also be able to respect and love.' Such was my ideal of a husband, and I feared I should never be able to find such a being upon earth, therefore I wanted to become the bride of Christ. He I knew would love me as none upon earth, for He once died for me, and so I fixed all my hopes on Him. But to-day, that I am your wife, I am happy, because my dreams have been realised, and I love you even more than I thought I should love the ideal picture I had formed in my mind of my future husband. Now I am not afraid of loving you too much. Even if I were to be condemned by it, I could not love you less.' \ .

I took her in my arms, and seated her on my knees. She looked at that moment more than ever the picture of the Immaculate Conception. "I tell you that I appreciate you, that I admire you, that I adore you," I said to her. "Can I tell you anything more passionate still, and that comes nearer to the

heart? Have I in those words exhausted the language of the heart? No; I have not even begun this rich language that only consists of a word, but of a word worth more than all the rest put together. I have one thing to say to you, only one, the last—*I love you!* Ten thousand words can precede this one, but not one can succeed it in any language, and once pronounced, it only remains to repeat it for all eternity.

“I have told you, Conchita, that I love you; what more can I say to you after this one word? Everything passes, and is forgotten in this world, but this word remains always on our lips, and engraved on our hearts. Pronouncing it I have given you all my life, all my existence. Pains and pleasures pass as shadows and sunshine over our existence, they succeed each other constantly, they are the *chiaroscuro* of our lives, and life goes after them—life passes away as they pass away. What is life? A breath of existence, not even an instant of the eternity that is awaiting us. We are always between two eternities, the past and the future, both unknown to us. Earth life is but a succession of events that we shall soon forget, but if we love during our lives, if we ever experience that passion that is as a glimpse of the heaven above us, that is the beginning of a truer life. Then life becomes a succession of events for ever to be remembered. It is as a dream of happiness, a preface of the eternal happiness that we shall enjoy in the other world. Fill all your life, my dar-

ling, with this passion, remember that it is the only one that you will be able to carry with you to heaven, for God is love, and all love is from Him.

“Eternal love is the life of God. The life of man is composed of finite loves, but a succession of infinite finites is the eternal love, the divine love. Love carried to its greatest height is heaven itself. The love that spirits have for God, as shown to His creatures, is the complement of life, is the eternal life of the being who thus loves. The love of God is supreme knowledge, supreme power, supreme felicity. Love, Conchita mia, love, and love for ever.

“ ‘God loves from whole to parts ; but human soul
Must rise from individual to the whole.
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake ;
The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads ;
Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace ;
His country next, and next the human race ;
Wide and more wide, th’ o’erflowings of the mind
Take every creature in, of every kind ;
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
And heaven beholds its image in his breast.’ ”

John came soon afterwards to ask us our arrangements for that day.

“Let us go out of the town,” exclaimed Conchita ; “let us go away far from the habitations of men, and let us enjoy the beautiful sun of God, as it shines upon the green fields of the earth.”

“I have thought of a very pleasant excursion,” I said ; “it is to go up in the steamer Iona to the

Kyles of Bute, to-morrow, Saturday ; she sails from Glasgow ; we should, I think, take advantage of this circumstance to see those magnificent islands and lakes that are said to be the finest in Scotland."

My young bride was delighted with the idea. "But in the mean time," she observed, "could we not go out of Glasgow and spend this glorious day in the country?"

"We can go by the railroad to Dumbarton, I suggested ; Dumbarton has a fine old castle on the banks of the Clyde, and from there we could go to Greenock, where we shall take the steamer to-morrow for the Kyles of Bute."

This plan was approved of by Conchita, and an hour afterwards, we were in the railroad on our way to Dumbarton, where shortly afterwards we arrived.

One enters Dumbarton from the station by Church Street, a fine street, in which are situated the Town Hall and the Academy, a modern building of very good appearance. In the same street, a little lower, we passed the ruins of a very ancient archway. The street terminates before the church, where two others begin, called High Street and Castle Street, in which are the great manufactories of Mr Denny.

The hotel at which we stopped was called the Elephant. I remember wondering at the time what an elephant had to do in the centre of Scotland. We did not, however, stop very long there, and after some moments rest, we found our way to the castle.

The position of the castle of Dumbarton is, in reality, a most striking one ; it is built upon a rock

that rises out of the Clyde to a height of about 560 feet, and the blue waters of this river bathe the feet of its old walls. On the other side flows the Leven, previous to its junction with the great river. The country around is flat, and this makes the castle appear more picturesque and imposing. Its situation between the highlands and the lowlands was very favourable for the defence of the country, and for this reason, this fortress has been so often the object of terrific and bloody conflicts. We all know the brave way in which Sir William Wallace took it at the beginning of his wars against England, and we have all admired the courage and faithfulness that the young Edwin displayed in its attack. Here, too, Wallace was confined for some time previous to his being sent to England to die.

Since that time, many have been the battles that have been fought under its walls. That won by Captain Crawford of Tordunhill, in the reign of Queen Mary, being one of the most successful.

We ascended to the top of this formidable fortress by a narrow and very steep staircase that seems to have been cut in the rock, and after passing a little door 'or gateway, used anciently as a portcullis, that has on either side, the heads of Wallace and Monteith (the governor of the citadel at the time of the former's imprisonment), we entered a sort of small court, where one of the soldiers of the garrison, dressed in the picturesque costume of the country, offered himself as our *cicerone*.

We followed him through another stairway that ends at the highest point of the castle. From here, we obtained a magnificent view of the Clyde, of the old town of Dumbarton, and of the distant, but even from here, beautiful district of the lakes, over which seemed to rise, as a sentinel, the elevated Ben Lomond.

“There you see Scotland,” I said to Conchita, pointing to this varied panorama. “There you have, at your feet, this land so often stained with the blood of her heroes, and that, in spite of her endless enemies, has never yet been conquered.”

Our guide showed us the ruins of an old Roman fortress built, by the masters of the world, upon this rock, as a sentinel over the land they were never able to subject to their rule. For Caledonia, as Iberia, had her Viriatos and her Numancias.

He also showed us in the armoury, amidst a very poor collection of ancient arms, the sword of the great Wallace which is great even as its master, for it measures five and a-half feet in length.

On our way down, we visited Wallace’s prison, after which, and as we were rather tired, and I did not want to fatigue Concha too much, we returned to the hotel with the intention of going out very early the next day to catch the steamer that was to take us to Rothesay and the Kyles of Bute.

The next morning we breakfasted before seven, and very soon afterwards we were on the pier waiting for the little steamer in which we were conveyed to Greenock.

This is the maritime port of Glasgow, and is rapidly becoming a large town that will, some day, be very important. When we arrived at the pier, the *Iona* was already there, and we scarcely had time to get on board of her, before she set sail in the direction of the mouth of the river.

It was about eight when we left Greenock, and when this beautiful steamer began to move her wheels over the waters of the blue Clyde.

The scenery of this river is really splendid. Few rivers can boast of such lovely and picturesque shores ; from the place we now occupied, we could see a superb panorama of Argyleshire and Dumbartonshire, with their lakes and their mountains. The Gareloch, the Holy Loch, and Loch Long, pour their waters into the Clyde near this place, and their shores, for several miles, are thickly studded with villas and country places. Between the Gareloch and Loch Long, rises a promontory, thickly covered with trees, in the midst of which stands the mansion of Roseneath, an Italian palace, which occupies the site of the old castle of the Argyle family.

A moment after we doubled the point of Loch Long, and we came in sight of the town of Dunoon, one of the most fashionable summer residences in the west of Scotland.

“What a beautiful river this is !” Conchita said, enchanted with the first glimpse she caught of the scene that surrounded us on all sides. “How picturesque and how poetic ! How I should like

to know the history of some of those castles that seem so romantic and so mysterious !”

“There is a curious legend,” I said, “about that castle that rises behind the now gay town of Dunoon. If you like, I will relate it to you, as well as I can remember it.”

“Oh, yes ! Walter,” exclaimed the beautiful girl, overjoyed with the idea. “Tell me that old legend. You know how fond I am of quaint stories ; and when they are told by you, they seem to have a double interest for me.”

I seated myself by her side on the deck of the steamer, and putting my arm around her, I began the following tale.

CHAPTER V.

THE PUNISHMENT OF PRIDE : A LEGEND.*

THE Castle of Dunoon, the ruins of which you see behind the town, that to-day is one of the gayest summer resorts of the rich inhabitants of Glasgow, rises upon a little hill not far from the shore.

At the time of my legend, however, this castle was an extensive Gothic pile, with high and solid walls, with warlike ramparts, and impregnable battlements. Its hall was spacious, and its rooms were adorned with the luxuries of the age ; but to-day all this grandeur and glory has disappeared.

“ No more its arches echo to the noise
Of joy and festive mirth. No more the glance
Of blazing taper through its window beams,
And quivers on the undulating wave ;
But naked stand the melancholy walls,
Lash'd by the win'try tempest, cold and bleak,
That whistle mournful through the empty halls,
And piecemeal crumble down the towers to dust.”

The view that this castle commands is one of the finest in all Scotland. Towards the north is seen, between two green hills, the blue and peaceful waters of the Holy Loch, that in truth is only one of the

* See Appendix, Note I.

arms of the Clyde that in this place runs into several parts of the land, forming a thousand lakes, as if the wide bed through which it runs were not large enough to contain it. A little farther, forming a background to this lake, rise the mountains that surround Loch Long, amidst which we can perceive the one called *The Cobbler*, always at work.

In front of the old castle extends the fertile and ever-beautiful valley of the Clyde, above which rise to-day towards the blue sky the hundreds and hundreds of chimneys of Greenock and Port-Glasgow. But at the period of which I am speaking, the valley of the Clyde was still in all its purity, and its virgin soil was still covered with the greenest of grass and the tallest of trees. Between this plain and the little hill upon which rises the Castle of Dunoon ran then, as to-day, the wide river Clyde, carrying everything with it, towards the sea.

From the ancient towers of this castle one could see in the distance the islands of Bute, and Cambray, covered with vegetation, and rising, always green, upon the blue sea, like emeralds upon a surface of crystal.

Would it be possible to find a more beautiful site for a castle of the middle ages?

It was about the middle of the fifteenth century when my tale begins. This old castle was then inhabited by Sir Hamish Campbell, Lord of Loch Awe, and his family.

The Lords of Loch Awe had been masters of this

castle, one of the safest strongholds of Argyllshire, since the year 1310, when Robert the Bruce conferred it, with all its surrounding territory, upon Sir Colin Campbell. Previous to this it had been a royal residence; and this, added to its magnificent situation, rendered it an object of admiration in the west of Scotland. The Lords of Dunoon were always feared and respected, on account of their influence with the Sovereign, and also in consideration of their impregnable fortress. Moreover, the Lords of Loch Awe were connections, although distant, of the Earls of Argyle, whose surname they bore; and this added to the influence they exercised in those feudal times, when the great lords were little less than sovereigns, who ruled as they pleased over their estates and their tenantry.

Sir Hamish Campbell was in every sense of the word a knight of the middle ages. All his time was given to hunting and to the other rural sports of the time; the field was his proper place, as he often said himself. He was also fond of war, and he kept a little army of his own always ready at his call. But in spite of those warlike preparations, the Lord of Dunoon had never been in any battle; and either because of his generous nature, or of the peace that reigned between him and his powerful neighbours, or because of his imposing little army, the fact is, that nobody ever molested him in his impregnable castle, where he lived as a true baron, in the bosom of his family.

His wife was a daughter of Lord Douglas of Tantalion ; and as a descendant of this noble family, her pride knew no bounds. Often was the good Sir Hamish obliged to reprimand his beloved companion for this unparalleled haughtiness that she had inherited from her forefathers, and which he always said would finish by putting an end to his long sustained peace with his powerful and jealous neighbour, the Lord of Roseneath, and which even displeased the Earl of Argyle, the chief of the clan.

The first years of his married life were most happy ; they were spent in balls and banquets, feasts and tournaments—intended to gratify the pride of Lady Campbell, who could not rest while others were greater than herself. But these pleasures alone could not satisfy her ; feasts and entertainments were not enough to sustain the honour and pride of the house of Loch Awe ; an heir was necessary, and this heir did not come. Only at the end of three years were her desires fulfilled, and then only partly : the beautiful Lady Campbell gave birth to the child that was to complete their happiness, but, much to their disappointment and grief, this child, so long wished for, proved to be only a daughter. The despair of Lady Campbell knew no bounds. At length, however, she resigned herself again to wait, but no heir made his appearance. At the end of four years, after an endless succession of doubts and fears, she began again to hope that her desires would at last be realised ; but her pride and ambition were not destined to be grati-

fied in this respect: the new-born child was another girl.

After this, the unfortunate couple renounced all hopes of ever having an heir to whom they could transmit the old family name, and all their hopes in the future began to rest now on the young Margaret, the eldest of their daughters. Lady Campbell took upon herself the education of this child, and she, at the same time, begged her family to look out for some young nobleman worthy of the hand of her precious daughter, heiress to the castle and estate of Dunoon.

At the time my story commences, Margaret Campbell was a pretty and bright girl of sixteen. Her sister Alice was less beautiful and less interesting, and she was also four years younger.

The character of the two sisters was very similar. Living always together and alone in the old castle, and being too young yet to take part in the banquets and in the numerous feasts given by their mother, they were naturally thrown very much upon their own resources. The whole day they spent in playing and running together in the gardens and woods adjoining, and in reading together the old legends of chivalrous Scotland. They were so united and so fond of each other, that their souls were almost as one; all their ideas and thoughts were the same; secrets did not exist between them. But this moral influence that had so joined their thoughts and feelings had not been able to affect their physical appearance. They

were so unlike each other, that it would have been almost impossible to take them for sisters.

Margaret's complexion was dazzlingly fair, and she had a beautiful figure. Her beauty was most striking; her black hair and her large dark eyes were the talk of all who knew her. But her beauty was that of youth; and Dr Thomas Harris, the family doctor, used to say, "I should not be surprised, if this lovely child, that all now admire so much for her beauty, should grow up a plain woman;" and he was right: the beauty of this girl consisted in her fresh colour, her long and abundant black hair, and her flexible figure. But, well examined, Margaret Campbell lost all her attractions.

Her features were far from being regular and well formed; her mouth was large, and the corners of it slightly turned down, giving her a disdainful smile. Her eyes were large, it is true, but they wanted expression, and their colour was of a blueish gray, that did not suit with her black hair. To all this, I must add that the mother's stern haughtiness was reflected in every feature of the daughter; that this disdainful smile and this scornful look made her sometimes far from beautiful. But, in spite of all this, Margaret was considered in her paternal home a lovely girl; and people heard so much of the *beautiful heiress of Dunoon*, that they all agreed at last in thinking her really good-looking, and her mother, of course, thought her the most perfect of women.

Alice was quite different from her sister: less

beautiful at first sight, her beauty was more perfect, although less striking. Her complexion, it is true, was not so dazzlingly fair, nor her figure half so good, yet there was something about this young girl that announced a much more lasting beauty. Her features were perfect, although her hair was light chestnut, almost red, which ill became her dark complexion, but her eyes were much more expressive than those of her sister, and although she was in reality quite as proud, her extreme youth and her sweet smiles made one almost entirely forget it.

And now, my beautiful Conchita, having described my *dramatis personæ*, I shall begin my story.

Lady Campbell, who, from the first years of her marriage, had undertaken the entire management of the household, also took upon herself the education of her two daughters. But being still a young woman, with no small pretensions to beauty herself, she thought that it would be impossible for her to give up all her time to the girls, and as she did not like to send them to a convent, she constituted an old lady, one of her tenants, as *duenna*, to take charge of these girls. This good old lady took very little pains, however, with her young pupils, and the two sisters grew up with scarcely any education whatever. Their mother only took pains in teaching them the arrogance and pride that she had inherited from her ancient family, and that her own mother had instilled into her heart during the first years of her life, in her paternal home of the Douglas.

Lady Campbell spent hours and hours talking to the young girls about their ancient family, their importance, and their beauty. She was determined that her daughters should maintain the honour of the great family they were called to represent. Margaret was, of course, the object of her greatest care, not only because she was the eldest, and therefore the heiress, but also because she thought her the handsomest, and the one who united the best conditions to make a marriage suited to her high aspirations.

As Margaret grew up, those extraordinary notions became more and more developed in her heart. When she arrived at her sixteenth year, which was about the year 1460, that is to say, at the time when my tale begins, my young heroine thought herself so beautiful and so noble, that she did not consider any one worthy of notice if he were not a prince or a duke. Lady Campbell said to her every morning, "How beautiful you are, Margaret, you will some day be something great, you will be a princess if you let me manage everything as I think proper. And you should certainly hope to be one, for your family, as much by your father's side as by mine, would certainly not be unwelcome in any princely house."

In this way, always taught to think so much of herself, and with the conviction that she was destined to become a princess, she quite looked down from the height of her pride upon all the young nobles of the surrounding castles.

Lady Campbell used all her influence to find a

husband worthy of her daughter's hand, as soon as she arrived at a marriageable age, but she found this a difficult thing, much more difficult than she had expected, and, with the exception of the young Earl of Argyle, none seemed good enough for her. She therefore employed all her arts, and all her powerful relations, to secure this splendid match for her daughter.

The first fear of the anxious mother was, of course, that of her Margaret's falling in love with some poor knight of the neighbourhood, and this fear increased when she heard that Sir Guy Ashton, only son of the great enemy of her family, Lord Ashton, was madly in love with her. She watched each movement, each word of her daughter, as the officer of the customs observes and searches the packages belonging to persons whom he suspects. She scorned all advice from her husband and from her now banished brother, Lord Douglas, about this grand marriage, and at last she finished by placing her daughter at such a distance from her innumerable suitors, that no one dared even to approach her.

Margaret, in her turn, did not in the least object to being watched ; on the contrary, it made her feel of greater importance, and it added to her vanity, but all this care was perfectly needless. Her ambition was as great, if not greater, than her mother's ; and she did not in the least trouble herself about the sighs and tears of her admirers. Love had not yet taken possession of her heart.

The heart of a young girl may be compared to a fragile ship, which while it remains in the tranquil lake of innocence and youth, can be governed by any rudder; but which when it enters on the rough sea of the passions, and when it is carried hither and thither by the contrary winds of impulse, no rudder is strong enough to direct its course, and it remains tempest-tossed upon the furious waves of the ocean of life. This was the case with Margaret Campbell; at first she allowed herself to be led by her mother in the paths of her endless ambition; her youthful heart, open to every impression, became completely engrossed in the pride of the Douglasses, and she determined to wait patiently until some prince or some powerful chieftain should come to pay homage to her irresistible attractions. She was so convinced, that at last all the flower of Scotland would be at her feet, that she despised and disdained all the young knights and nobles that came to Dunoon Castle. But before a suitor of rank high enough came to ask her hand, an incident occurred that would have rendered the arrival of all the dukes and earls of the kingdom too late.

About this time the King of Scotland died. He was at the time engaged in the siege of the Castle of Roxburgh, an old fortress situated near the junction of the Tweed and the Teviot, that had remained in the hands of the English after the fatal battle of Durham. One of the guns that had been prepared to attack the castle burst in going off, and a fragment

of iron broke James' thigh bone, and killed him on the spot.

Upon the death of King James, II. of that name, the army was dispersed, and began to give up all hope of freeing the country from the invading English. But Margaret, the widowed Queen, went to the council assembled by the chiefs, and, with her young son, James III., in her arms, spoke those memorable words :—" Fie, my noble lords !—Think not now so shamefully to give up an enterprise which is so bravely begun, or to abandon the revenge of the unhappy accident which has befallen us before this ill-omened castle. Forward, my brave lords, and persevere in your undertaking, and never turn your backs till this siege is victoriously ended. Let it not be said that such brave champions needed to hear from a woman, and a widowed one, the courageous advice and comfort which she ought rather to receive from you !"

The chiefs took courage from this speech of the Queen's, and the siege was recommenced. Soldiers came from all parts of the country to help the persevering force that surrounded the fortress. Sir Hamish Campbell would himself gladly have gone with his little army to help his youthful king, but Lady Campbell would not hear of this. She could not easily forget the death inflicted upon her brave father in the castle of Stirling by the young sovereign's own father. She could not efface from her proud mind the memory of her three brothers slain by the king's soldiers. For

this proud family, that once even tried to appropriate to itself the royal crown, fell at length without any decisive struggle by its own unjust, rebellious, and wavering ambition. James Douglas, Lady Campbell's eldest brother, was determined to wear the crown of Scotland, after the murder of his father by King James, and several and bloody were the struggles that took place, until at last, the dreadful battle of the Carron, fought on May 1st, 1455, brought to an end all further trouble for the legitimate monarch, James Stuart. The domineering and princely family of Douglas was completely destroyed, as if the hand of God had preserved the legitimate king's rights against the armies of the rebellious Earl.

Archibald Douglas, Earl of Murray, one of the Earl's brothers, fell in the battle, his head was cut off, and sent to the King. Hugh, Earl of Ormond, was wounded and made prisoner, and immediately executed, and John, Lord Balveny, the third brother, escaped to England, where the Earl also found a retreat.

After twenty years of banishment the long-forgotten rebel returned to his own country in 1484, during the reign of the new King, James III. He attempted to make a small incursion on the frontiers of Annandale. He was, however, defeated, and sent as a prisoner to the Abbey of Lindores, to which sentence he submitted calmly, only using a popular proverb of this country, "He that cannot do better, must be a monk." He lived in that convent only four years,

and with him, as the last of his family, expired the principal branch of these terrible "Douglasses of the Bloody Hand."

But in the epoch of my tale this had not yet taken place. James III. was but a boy of eight years of age, and Lord Douglas still lived, although banished to England. Yet his youngest sister, Lady Campbell, lost no hope, (for this is the last thing we lose) and she still believed in the future grandeur of the house of her forefathers. She still hoped to see one of her race on the throne of Scotland. And she was ready to make any sacrifice to obtain the favour of Queen Margaret and of her son. Therefore she opened her castle of Dunoon to the troops sent by the northern clans to help the siege of Roxburgh.

Lady Campbell tried to hide her pride, and gain the gratitude of the young prince, by entertaining his soldiers, and giving them hospitality, as was not unfrequently done in those feudal times by the barons in their castles.

Good Sir Hamish was delighted with his wife's idea, and at once ordered a succession of festivities to take place, while the army of Lord Macduff (this was the clan that had accepted his hospitality) remained within his walls.

Amongst this numerous host there was more than one brave knight capable of turning the head of a Helen, but one above all others was noticeable amongst his comrades. He was but a common page, called Bernard Ross, but his appearance, his courage,

his talents, and his manners won for him the good graces of all that knew him. Even Margaret, who had displayed the greatest scorn for the handsomest and noblest knight of the clan, could not help noticing him, amidst this rough set of northern soldiers. His good figure, his courage, and above all, his conversation, won entirely her heart, as yet so free from any foreign affections.

She confessed to herself that she loved him, but she could not understand how it happened that he was not a nobleman. This doubt soon, however, passed from her mind; she convinced herself at last that the young Bernard was a duke in disguise, who wanted to win fame and be knighted on the field, before he would declare his proper station and rank, she had often read of such a thing, and his noble mein and proud carriage proved him beyond a doubt to be a nobleman in disguise. Once convinced of this, for we can easily bring ourselves to believe what we like, she did not hesitate to give him her heart with all the innocence of a young girl, and with all the self-love of a Douglas.

Bernard, who could not understand his easy victory, knowing the ambitious ideas of the young lady herself, and, moreover, having heard Lady Campbell say that her daughter was engaged to the Earl of Argyle, was quite bewildered. But this sudden passion of the young heiress soon found an echo in his noble heart, and he began to love Margaret with all the passion of a first love, such as our own is, my sweet

Conchita, but let us forget ourselves now, and only think of poor Margaret and her unfortunate lover.

The more Bernard saw of her the more he loved her, and the more he felt encouraged to declare his love. Soon after he became completely convinced that the young lady's heart was entirely his, when he heard one of the officers say to him one day, as they were walking on the ramparts, "How fortunate you are, Bernard! The beautiful heiress of Dunoon asked me but yesterday the name and position of your family." Bernard trembled for a moment, but at last succeeded in calming himself, and he asked of his friend, "What answer did you give to her questions?" "I said that you were the bravest and noblest fellow in the clan, and by St Andrew I was right." Bernard pressed his friend's hand, but remained silent. He was happy, for now he knew she loved him.

So passed the time quickly and happily for the inhabitants of the castle of Dunoon, and slowly and miserably for the starving garrison in the fortress of Roxburgh. The Scots pressed the siege, but their numbers were small, and the English army was already in Northumberland, menacing a sudden attack upon the united clans at the least expected moment. The assembled lords talked again of raising the siege, and this time not even the courage and decision of Queen Margaret would have sufficed to sustain the failing minds of the soldiers and their chiefs. But Bishop Kennedy went himself before the walls of Roxburgh, and called to every true Scot to follow

him and destroy the fortress that had caused the death of King James.

Lord Macduff no sooner heard this news than he decided to go, with all his clan, and help the army at Roxburgh. Not one minute would he wait. The moment of departure came. Bernard, whose heart was entirely given up to his love, could not make up his mind to go without first seeing his lovely Margaret, and receiving from her own mouth the avowal of her love. He therefore asked her for an interview. She at first hesitated, but at last she granted it: she wanted to know for certain his real name and his proper rank, although she was sure of his noble descent, and that he was a young earl in disguise. How easily we imagine a thing when we want it to be true!

It was a beautiful eve in autumn, and the full moon lighted up with her pale rays the terraces and ramparts of Dunoon, when Bernard, covered with his long cape, and quite concealed by the projection of the walls and by the rich vegetation that covered the lower part of the castle, descended to the lowest terrace, near the banks of the Clyde. Five minutes had not passed away before he discerned, at the opening of one of the wooded paths, the well-beloved form of his lady-love.

The young soldier rushed forward, and, bending one knee before her, pressed her lily-white hand to his lips.

Margaret was the first to speak. "I have granted

you this interview, Mr Ross," she said, "because I wanted to know your intentions and your true name."

"Do not let us talk of names and families, beloved lady: here all breathes love, and nothing else. Calm thyself, oh! my love, and forget, by my side, for a moment the dull hours you pass in yonder sombre fortress. Ah! is it not true, oh! my angel, that on this lonely shore the moon shines more clearly and one can breathe more freely? This air, so full of the aroma of the wild flowers that rise from those green fields; that water, so calm and blue, that seeks to kiss thy feet; ah! is it not true, my sweet Margaret, that they are whispering of love? And those two liquid pearls that are peeping out of thine heavenly eyes, and that rosy blush that now suffuses thy fair cheeks, are they not also born of love? Oh! my beautiful Margaret, see here at thy feet all my life and my fortune are prostrate. One word would open heaven to me; at the murmur of another, I will plunge into yonder river."

"Oh, stop, for God's sake! Bernard," the young girl cried, raising him from the ground; "when I hear those words, I seem to go mad, and my brain burns, my head swims, and my heart is ready to burst. If I had not loved thee, Bernard, would I have come to meet thee here? I know that my honour and that of my family is in my hands; but passion is stronger in my heart than the sense of duty, and even of pride."

"Oh! thank heaven you love me, Margaret. Now

I shall fear nothing ; no arm can hurt me, no arrow can pierce my heart, for I leave it here at thy feet. I will go to Roxburgh ; the world will hear my name ; my arm will slay the murderer of our King ; and then I shall be worthy of thy hand, my beautiful pearl, my lovely Margaret."

She trembled at this vehement speech. She loved him more than ever ; but why was he not *now* worthy of her hand ? why must he conquer that name that by his birth should belong to him already ? She wanted to clear the mystery at once, and after a little hesitation she began—

"Before loving one another, my Bernard, it is necessary to know our names. You know mine, but yours as yet is unknown to me. Discover thyself, my brave knight. I will keep thy secret as I have kept thy love, hidden in my heart. I see through your conduct, my gallant champion : you hide your noble name, in order to proclaim it one day before the world as that of the deliverer of Scotland."

The young man was surprised at this unexpected speech ; his courage seemed to fail him, and he dropped the hand he held between his. "You know my name, Margaret," he said at last ; "I am the Esquire, Bernard Ross, page to the Lord Macduff. I have no secrets from you ; I have never deceived you. It breaks my heart to undeceive you now, if you have thought me more. I am not a nobleman, not even a knight ; but I will become both if you only love me as I love you. I offered you my love as Bernard Ross, and

you accepted it ; but now I see that I am not enough for the daughter of Sir Hamish Campbell. I will therefore go to the battlefield, and make myself worthy of her. I fear nothing if you love me still. But, before going, tell me, oh ! my beautiful and queenly love, will you accept my hand when I am worthy of thine ?”

The proud girl had heard this speech as a criminal hears his death-sentence. She remained like a statue, leaning over the battlements ; all the colour went out of her face, and her eyes looked vaguely upon her lover. All her long-cherished hopes fell to the ground : she who had refused knights and nobles, because she did not think them good enough for her, was now deeply in love, and at the mercy of a simple page, without name or friends ! It was too hard a blow for her, and she could say nothing to that faithful and once loved, but now despised, lover.

Bernard noticed her indecision, observed her inner struggle, and, throwing himself once more at her feet, exclaimed, amidst his tears, “ Oh ! answer me, Margaret ; answer me. This incertitude is worse than death. You yourself have just told me that you love me ; have you so soon forgotten this love ? Tell me, when I come back from Roxburgh, will you be mine ?”

This last word was scarcely audible, but Margaret divined it, and, making a tremendous effort, answered, as she burst into a flood of tears, “ *Never——never.*” She advanced two steps, and tried to fly, but her strength failed her, and she fell senseless to the ground.

Bernard looked at her for a second, knelt down, and kissed her fair forehead. "She is right," he murmured. "The descendant of the great Douglas cannot become the bride of a poor Squire. I was a madman to think otherwise.—It ruins my life. For her sake I would have been a hero; I would have tried to conquer a name and a title; but without her, only one thing remains for me—*death*," and saying those words, he threw himself over the ramparts, and plunged into the river below.

Six months had passed since that desperate scene between the lovers. Margaret had heard nothing of the fate of Bernard; she thought him with Lord Macduff; but her heart burned still with this first love; she could not forget his last words, and her cruel answer. She loved him more than ever. The war with England had come to a happy conclusion. The Scottish chiefs, helped by the little army of Lord Macduff, had persevered in the siege of Roxburgh castle until the garrison, receiving no relief from the English army in Northumberland, was obliged to surrender the place through famine. The English governor was put to death, and the death of the brave King of Scots was fully avenged. The assembled lords levelled the walls of the castle to the ground, and returned victorious from this enterprise which had cost them so dear.

Queen Margaret was delighted, and, to express her satisfaction, interceded with the young Earl of Argyle, and finished by promising the pardon of the Earl of

Douglas, and his restoration to all his former rights, if the Earl of Argyle married Margaret Campbell, the daughter of the Douglas' only sister, thus uniting the two most powerful families of the kingdom.

The Earl consented to this union ; he had often heard the beauty of Margaret praised at the court, and he therefore accepted Sir Hamish's invitation to a great hunt on the banks of the Gare-Loch, in order to see his future bride, and judge for himself.

This news filled with pleasure the tenantry, and friends of Sir Hamish, and Lady Campbell who at last was going to see her long dreamt of wishes realised, surpassed herself in the preparations that she made in order to receive her noble guest.

Margaret heard this news with the greatest indifference ; what was the world to her now that she had lost her lover ? She, of all the inhabitants of Dunoon castle, was the only one who remained cool and self-possessed,

The day of the Earl's arrival came at last. All the inhabitants of the Clyde were ready to receive the chief of their clan in the park of the castle. The bells rung their merry peals from the early morning, the pipers played their gayest tunes upon their primitive but melodious instruments, the young girls sang as nightingales among the roses, all was gaiety and happiness that day. Inside the castle, Lady Campbell gave her last directions, and the arrangements of the horses and the hounds were superintended by Sir Hamish himself, for the great hunt that was to take

place on the morrow. All were gay and happy excepting our poor heroine, she for whom all these festivities were organized, she whom all hoped soon to see bride of the young chief, she alone was dull and miserable in the midst of the general rejoicings.

Bernard occupied all her thoughts even at this moment, when her ambitious plans were at last going to be realised. "Can he love me still?" she said to herself. Can he love me after that dreadful night on the ramparts? . . . Oh! if he has a heart, he must surely hate me now. I was so cruel to him, . . . and to myself! But what could I do; all my hopes had been destroyed, all my thoughts of happiness had vanished. I only did what I should have done, what the honour of my family obliged me to do, to refuse an unworthy love, although I should be obliged first to destroy my own heart. My uncle's life depends on my decision, and what is my poor heart compared to the honour of the house of Douglas? Now, thanks to me, he will again be taken into favour, and who knows if some day we do not end by occupying that throne that by right should be ours?"

Such were poor Margaret's thoughts, the two great passions of love and of ambition fighting continually in her tender bosom.

On the evening of that memorable day the Earl arrived, with all his retinue of pages, knights, and squires.

Sir Hamish Campbell received his noble guest in

the entrance hall, and after the ordinary salutations were exchanged, he conducted him to the great banqueting hall, where Lady Campbell and the other ladies of the castle, amongst whom was Alice, beautifully dressed in brocades and gold, and literally covered with precious stones, were assembled to greet the chief of their clan.

The Earl mistook this younger daughter for the renowned heiress of Dunoon, and, taking her hand, agreeably surprised by her beauty, he said, "In truth, my Lady Margaret, your beautiful face is even handsomer than I could ever have pictured to myself in my most pleasant dreams." Everybody was surprised at this mistake, but Lady Campbell corrected it by saying, "This is not my daughter Margaret, my Lord, but my second daughter, Alice; to-morrow you will see her, to-night she begs to be excused from paying her respects to your Lordship on account of a slight indisposition."

The young chief excused himself for his mistake, and, taking the hand of the mistress of the house, passed into the great dining hall, where a magnificent supper awaited them.

In the meantime Margaret had retired to her chamber, and, after sending away her attendants, she sent a message to her sister Alice, asking her to come to her as soon as possible.

Half an hour had passed away before Alice came to her sister's dormitory. She entered the door to find Margaret kneeling in front of an image of Christ

on the cross, in fervent prayer. When she saw her sister she rose, and, taking her by the hand, she showed her the image, saying at the same time, "Do you see that crucifix, Alice? It represents our earthly sorrows. Each of us is obliged to carry his cross, and at last we are all nailed to it, for each of us must be sacrificed for the rest of humanity."

Alice, grieved and surprised, tried to console her sister by describing to her the beautiful appearance of the Earl, his splendid dress, his numerous attendants, and the magnificence of his retinue. Margaret listened to her in silence, and when she had quite finished, she said, "What to me is the person of my bridegroom! I marry the Earl of Argyle, not the man that personifies him! If, instead of a handsome youth, he had been a deformed old man, I would have married him all the same. . . . My heart was never taken into consideration in this affair, no, not even by me. . . . My pride and my ambition were the only feelings consulted. . . . Oh, Alice, I am ashamed to own it, but I still love poor Bernard!"

After these sad words the two sisters separated. But before Alice returned to the hall where the guests were still assembled, her sister said to her, "Alice, I am afraid of being alone in this lonely part of the castle, now that there are so many strangers in it; lock the door from the outside, dear sister, and to-morrow you can give the key to my maid, in that way I shall feel safer, and will not be afraid of being molested through the night."

Alice went away, carrying with her the key, and Margaret lost no time in going to her bed, she was so worn out that she soon fell fast asleep.

An hour had hardly elapsed when a strange noise awoke her. She listened, and again and again she thought that she heard this strange noise. It seemed to come from the chimney of the apartment. Margaret, frightened out of her sleep, raised her head from her pillows, and, opening the heavy curtains that hung round the old bedstead, she saw a man descend slowly, whilst making the most extraordinary movements, down the chimney. This was a large and old fashioned fire-place, that occupied nearly the whole of one side of the chamber. Being summer, there was, however, no fire in it.

This man, whom she took at first to be a robber, had all his clothes in rags that hung about him like so many ribbons. His hair was long, and hung in the most complete disorder over his face, and the whole of his person was in such a dilapidated state, that it would surely have inspired any one with horror and disgust.

Margaret, pale with fright, and with all her beautiful black hair hanging around her, rushed towards the door thinking to escape before the strange person who had entered her apartment in such an extraordinary and unexpected manner could notice her. But the door was shut, and her sister had borne away the key.

The poor girl then, half dead with fright, could not restrain a cry of horror, she ran again to the bed,

and tried to hide herself among the hangings, but the strange man saw her, and rushing after her, began a chase around the chamber that would have horrified any living soul ; the young girl screamed with all her force, and the man laughed with all his might, but the room was in the top of a lonely tower, and nobody could hear the dreadful cries of the one, or the awful laughter of the other.

At last her strength failed her, and she fell to the ground, the man who had come down the chimney took her in his arms, uttering a low, shrill, and penetrating cry.

Margaret raised her eyes, and for the first time she saw the face of the stranger. Then she recognised him. . . . It was Bernard Ross ! . . . Her head went round and round, her heart beat with violence, her breathing ceased, and she fell senseless upon her bed !

Yes, it was Bernard Ross, but in what a state !

The six months that had passed since that memorable night, when his destiny had been so cruelly solved, had made of him a wild madman ; those dreadful six months had transformed the gay cavalier into little more than a ferocious animal. His reason had gone after his love, and of the brave and gallant page, only remained the earthly body, deprived of his beauty, as of his senses.

One look had been enough to convince our poor heroine of the whole truth ; it was too much for her, and she had fallen fainting upon the bed. Bernard

threw himself over her breathless form, and encircled her neck with his bare arms.

A whole hour passed like this, without either of them making the slightest movement. When at last Margaret recovered her senses, she found herself imprisoned in the arms of her former lover, who, noticing her movement, cried, with all the strength of his voice, "Now I have thee at last, cruel and proud woman, you who despised me, you who played with my heart. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Now you will be mine—or die !" and the most diabolic laughter burst again from his lips that were covered with foam.

Margaret threw an anxious look around her, to see if there was any means of escape ; but, alas ! the door was locked from without, and this was the only exit available in her apartment.

She was obliged to submit to his embraces and his curses, to his kisses and his blows ; for she had no power whilst thus imprisoned in his strong arms.

Thus passed the hours, that were more like centuries of torture for the poor girl. The sight of her lover in this condition had awakened in her the sentiments of the wrong she had brought upon his innocent head. Her conscience tormented her perhaps more than his blows. "It is thine own fault," it said to her ; "you have turned his senses ; you have destroyed his reason ; you have extinguished his life."

She felt powerless in his grasp ; her moral as well as her physical strength had disappeared. Now for the first time she saw the height that this love had

attained in the heart of this man ; now she perceived the vehemence of that love which she had not even imagined.

Bernard's reason had quite left him, but his love reigned still in his heart ; in all his ravings and fancies the name of Margaret was constantly mixed up ; and he pronounced that name, that once had seemed so sweet to her ear when pronounced by him, with the loudest and wildest cries.

Each hour seemed an age to the unhappy girl ; and when at last the day began to dawn in the east, it found the young girl changed into an old woman. The lovely features of the heiress of Dunoon had disappeared, as if fifty years had passed over her head during that single night !

At eight o'clock Alice came herself to open her sister's door. As soon as she saw the door open, Margaret gave a start, and, freeing herself at last from the madman's arms, ran through the passage and through the saloons, and did not stop till she entered the hall, where the Earl of Argyle and the whole family and their guests were assembled for the early meal.

The astonishment of all present was inexpressible. The person who entered the apartment was no longer the beautiful Margaret, the renowned heiress of Dunoon, but a worn-out old woman, enfeebled by intense suffering. Her haggard face had lost all its freshness and colour, and was disfigured with wrinkles that indicated the enormous sufferings she

had gone through. Her beautiful black tresses were now quite white; and altogether her aspect made one shudder with horror.

Such was the beautiful Margaret after this night of terror!

The general consternation was only augmented when the cause of this disaster rushed himself into the hall. The mystery was now explained, and several men rushed forward and secured the madman, who, pointing his finger towards Margaret, continued his horrible laughter.

The old doctor undertook the madman's care, and Lady Campbell and Alice conducted Margaret to her apartment. She had hardly strength to narrate what had happened, and finished by fainting again upon the bed.

Alice told them the unfortunate love affair of her sister, and her proud behaviour. Lady Campbell could not bring herself to believe in this love of her daughter's, that she had not even suspected.

To this dreadful scene succeeded a calm still more painfully trying. The Earl and all his retinue of gay cavaliers departed that afternoon, seeing that his presence was now useless in the castle; and with him disappeared all the gaiety and all the former happiness of the old place. The unhappy Margaret continued seriously ill from the results of that terrible and never-to-be-forgotten night. The fever consumed her by slow and marked degrees, and carried her to the very verge of the grave; but God did not want

to take her until she had expiated the harm that her pride and ambition had brought upon her lover and upon her family.

After three months of constant pain and suffering, the poor woman slowly recovered. The first inquiries she made when she recovered her senses were about Bernard's fate. The doctor then informed her that he was a great deal better, and that by degrees he was regaining his lost mind, thanks to the great care they had taken with him.

Then she also learned, for the first time, that on the night of their interview he had been found by some fishermen in the river, that at first they had thought him dead, but that finding he lived, they had transported him to their hut, where he recovered his health but not his reason. Since then he had been kept for six months in a cave that they had discovered near the castle, from which he had run away the day of the Earl's arrival, when the fishermen who kept it had forgot to shut the door in the general rejoicings.

Margaret's first care, when she had recovered her health, was to see her lover; she had suffered so much during that dreadful night that had robbed her of her health, of her beauty, and of her youth, that she could not banish from her thoughts the idea that he who had been so constant, and who was innocent of all, should suffer for ever, and for her cause.

Her heart was on the whole good and noble, and was touched by his constancy, and by his present

most miserable condition, and from that moment she dedicated herself exclusively to soothe his sufferings, and to try to restore to him the reason she had been the cause of his losing.

Through her constant care, and with the doctor's skill, he soon recovered his reason, and what was his joy when he found himself in the arms of the Margaret he had so much loved !

Alice, in the meantime, had taken the place of her elder sister in the castle of Dunoon. She was now the great attraction there, and her gaiety and her smiling face succeeded in time to restore to the old castle some of its former gaiety, and to her unfortunate family a great deal of their lost happiness.

The Earl of Argyle, who had been struck with Alice's beauty from the moment he had seen her on the night of his arrival, asked her hand from her father, who was, of course, overjoyed at the idea. The Queen herself approved of the union, and the proud and ambitious Lady Campbell saw the dream of her life realised at last in the person of her second daughter. The idea that her brother would perhaps recover his estates and return to Scotland, was enough to flatter her pride and ambition, and to make her forget the blow she had received in her ambitious hopes for her eldest daughter.

The marriage took place in the chapel of the castle, and all those who assisted at it returned convinced that the newly married pair were the happiest couple in life, but they certainly would not have sustained

this with such determination if they had seen in a corner of the chapel Bernard and his Margaret, who had obtained that very day the permission from Sir Hamish to solemnise their union, and who indeed presented the most perfect picture of felicity that one can imagine.

CHAPTER VI.

THE KYLES OF BUTE.

WHEN I had finished this legend I felt two tears upon my hand.

Silence reigned for a few seconds, and then was broken by the sweet voice of my young bride, who said, "Poor Margaret! she really deserved to be happy after all she had suffered. Yet although I pity her, I cannot say that I admire your heroine, she was too haughty, and in her heart ambition occupied a greater place than love."

I took her hand again in mine, and said to her, "And you my angel, you who are so beautiful and so good, what would you have done if you had been placed like her between pride and love?"

"I would have sacrificed all for my lover, if I could not first have extinguished with my tears the flame that consumed my heart, I could never have had the cold courage to sacrifice my love to the honour of my name. But, thanks to the blessed virgin, this was never demanded of me, on the contrary, my mother's wishes were always mine. And your love filled the whole of my heart, so that there was no room there for any other sentiment. When

one dreads loving, it is only because that love is not a true one. Those inner struggles cannot proceed from a true holy passion, for such a passion would know no opposition."

"Oh my Conchita," I exclaimed, moved by those words, "let us return due thanks to God that such a sacrifice was never needed in order to secure thy happiness; if your impressionable heart had been put to the trial of having to choose between your family and your love, I think you would have perished in the struggle, you who are so innocent, so loving, so obedient, you would have died before taking such a resolution."

"Yes, Walter, I should have died, perhaps, although I am not so weak as you suppose, but, thanks to God's mercy, this was quite unnecessary in our case, and I give Him thanks night and morning for preserving me from all those trials and temptations that the greater part of lovers must suffer before obtaining the reward of their love."

"You judge the world according to the novels you have read, perhaps, my beloved Conchita. In real life love's prize is not so difficult to obtain as it is painted in those books. How many are married from the first to the one they love, as it has happened to us! It is true that some times one mistakes a passing admiration for a true love, but this is only when the mind is guided by ambition, by selfishness, or by the persuasions of our friends or relatives, rather than by our own feelings. The heart cannot be mistaken.

And one cannot fail to be happy if one marries the bride of one's choice, unless, like Arthur—

‘He loves better to bide by wood and river
Than in bower of his dame Queen Guinevere;
For he left that lady so lonely of cheer,
To follow adventures of danger and fear,
And little the frank-hearted monarch did wot
That she smiled in his absence on brave Lancelot.’

“For if such is the case, we must not wonder that the beautiful wife should seek in another the love she misses in her companion, and that she fills the heart with Lancelot's love that ought to have been filled with Arthur's only. How often this happens, however; how often misery and trouble are brought upon whole families by the negligence of one! And how many unhappy wives finish by exclaiming as Guinevere—

‘I wanted warmth and colour, which I found
In Lancelot. Now I see thee what thou art—
Thou art the highest, and most human, too,
Nor Lancelot, nor another.’

“But then, it is not every husband who pardons so royally as Arthur did.

“Life, however, is not all winning, and we must expect to lose sometimes; nothing is as perfect as we dream it to be, and nothing is as bad as we imagine. We expect to find a perfect woman for a wife, but we should first be sure that we are perfect ourselves.

“If life is not all uphill work, neither is it all play, and the difficulties and obstacles only make the thing more valued when once won.

“If the love affairs that have so much interested you in the novels you have read had been accomplished without the smallest difficulty, surely they would have lost all their interest in your eyes. Sorrow, suffering, struggles, numerous obstacles, oppositions, and difficulties are much more interesting than happiness and true love.

“Our whole moral existence depends, however, on this word ‘Love.’

“If we love an impossibility, we perish with it. If we love with hope, we waste our life, but we do not end its duration. But if we love and are beloved, then our lives are indeed supremely happy—sweet and serene as the heaven from whence love comes.

“This sort of love does not do for novels. In them the interest must augment as we advance in the book, and excitement and adventure are required to make up the plot.”

Conchita listened to me in silence, and when I had finished, she remarked, “Sometimes I have wondered if our love was of the same class as that described in novels. I compared the love I had for you, Walter, with those all-consuming passions of the Lorenzas, Rebeccas, Claras and Helens, of which we read in the most celebrated novels; and I found that my love was different from that felt by those women. And then, everything went so well in our case, everybody was so glad at our union, that sometimes I thought, ‘This cannot be love! This has no analogy whatever with the love of which I have read.’”

I could not restrain a smile. "And yet," I said, "you see, my darling, that after all we love each other as much as Romeo and Juliet, or Faust and Marguerite ever could love on earth. It is true that the history of our love would make a very poor plot for a tragedy or a novel ; but can it be less real for this ?"

The steamer stopped, and our conversation was interrupted. We had just entered the bay of Rothesay, and a moment after we reached the pier.

I turned my head to have a look at the town, and I was astonished at the magnificence of the scene before me.

Rothesay is situated at the extreme end of a large bay on the north side of the Island of Bute. In front of the harbour runs the Clyde, that stretches itself in every direction, forming an innumerable succession of lakes and bays, some of considerable extent. On the other side of the river rise the Highlands, always imposing, and always romantic and beautiful.

The town is built in the shape of an amphitheatre ; and on its highest part rises the old castle, the feudal residence of the ancient kings, and that, as an old man who is sitting next to me assures me, was built in the year 1100. He also informs me that Robert II., who rebuilt it, created his son David Duke of Rothesay, the first dukedom conferred in this country.

I also remembered that the celebrated Countess of Mar entertained here Sir William Wallace after the siege of Dumbarton, and how, in 1685, the Earl of Argyle burnt it to the very ground.

At ten o'clock we left Rothesay, and soon after we entered the famous Kyles of Bute.

This strait is formed by the northern coasts of the Island of Bute and by the mountains of Cowel, in the Highlands, forming thus a passage between the mouth of the Clyde and Loch Fyne.

What first attracted our attention on entering this sound was Loch Striven, a most romantic arm of the sea, that runs for a long way between the mountains into the mainland.

Conchita, who sketches very well, wanted to draw those peaceful waters, in which are reflected so many wonderful mountains and so many vaporous clouds ; but one moment after this glorious dream-like scene had vanished from our sight.

But another view, no less beautiful, was now beginning to unfold itself before us. As we advanced, the mountains seemed to rise in height and splendour, and their reflection became more and more distinct upon the water, that like a mirror surrounded us. The vegetation was not particularly fine ; but what can be compared with those grey and imposing rocks and cliffs against which the waters dash in foam, and sparkle like diamonds in the summer sun, with those solitary but magnificent lochs of Scotland that say so much to the imagination and to the heart ?

Colintrive is situated half way up the strait, and from this place to the entrance of Loch Ridden a beautiful valley divides the mountains.

“Right through the quarry, we beheld
A scene of soft and lovely hue!
Where blue and grey, and tender green,
Together make as sweet a scene
As ever human eye did view.
Beneath the clear blue sky we see
A little field of meadow ground;
But field or meadow name it not—
Call it of earth a small green plot,
With rocks encompassed round.”

Near this spot four lonely islands rise from the blue waves, and they seem to invite the traveller, already bewildered with the beauty of the scenery, to rest in their green meadows.

The Scotch gentleman by my side told me that in one of those islands, that of Eillangheirrig (name that is even more difficult to pronounce than to spell) existed once the famous fortress that the Earl of Argyle defended in 1685, when the Duke of Monmouth contemplated an invasion into Scotland. The Earl of Argyle, now Duke of the same name, is the powerful Mac-Callum More of the Highlands, and the chief of the clan Campbell. In the feudal times of old this nobleman exercised an unlimited power in this wild and warlike part of the island.

The Kyles of Bute end near the entrance of Loch Fyne, with some steep rocks called Ruban Point, on the other side of which the wide waves of the Atlantic roll with all their grandeur.

We were told we had passed the finest scenery, and so we took advantage of this to go down into the saloon to see if there were any signs of dinner. When

we arrived there, however, they told us that dinner would not be till two o'clock. So we returned on deck, and from thence ascended to the bridge, in order to see better the distant island of Arran, where,

“ In a lone convent’s silent cell,
The lovely Maid of Lorn remained,
Unmarried, unknown, while Scotland far
Resounded with the din of war ;
And many a month, and many a day,
In calm seclusion wore away.”

For a long, long time we remained on the bridge, contemplating together the grim and mysterious peaks of Scotland that rose before our sight, and the blue waves of the ocean that rolled in all their majesty to break upon the virgin shores of America.

“ So brilliant was the landward view,
The ocean so serene ;
Each puny wave in diamonds roll’d
O’er the calm deep, where lines of gold
With azure strove, and green.
The hill, the vale, the tree, the tower,
Glow’d with the tints of evening’s hour,
The beech was silver sheen ;
The wind breathed soft as lover’s sigh,
And oft renewed, seem’d oft to die,
With breathless stop between.
O who, with speech of war and woes,
Would wish to break the soft repose
Of such enchanting scene.”

“ What a true image of our life is this ocean now before us !” I exclaimed, contemplating the waters that rolled beneath my feet, “ The soul, as the pilot, traverses the ocean of life, knowing the sand-

banks and hidden rocks that the tranquil surface hides from the anxious looks he casts before him. Can man appease the furious waves of the great ocean of his existence, which sometimes in their folly would rise to kiss the stars of the impossible heaven?

“If you want to direct the fragile heart of humanity, try first to bridle the tempest, to stop the hurricane, to quiet the furious waves, and to do away with the hidden rocks of life. The waves of the sea succeed each other even as our lives. Oh! nothing, nothing shows us better the immense power of God than this endless ocean, that seems to obey his slightest sign! For God disposes of everything; nothing occurs on the earth that has not its mission, the tempests, the hurricanes, even the hidden rocks in our path have their mission, and do their work, as dictated by the supreme creator, the same in the seas of the earth as in those of our existence.

“It is from him that we receive light, the greatest of benefits that He can give us. He moves the wind, governs the seas, gives freshness and purity to the stream, and verdure to the spring. He fills our fields with flowers, and our groves with song.

“It is he who inspires us with the religion that lights up our understanding. He moves our hearts, refreshes our worn-out spirits. It is He who gives innocence to youth; it is to Him that we owe the flowers that we find in our path; it is He who sings in our hearts, who gives double life to matter, and who gives eternal life to the dead.

“It is He who comforts the heart in this ocean of tears, and makes of two souls one, in order that they may worship Him as He should be worshipped, in order that they may render Him adoration in spirit and in truth.”

Carried away by my devotional reveries, I had forgotten, as usual, all that surrounded me, and I only beheld Conception, who was looking at me with one of her most angelic looks, while her beautiful black eyes were filled with tears.

“You weep, my angel,” I said. “Yes, I weep, but it is with happiness,” and I took her in my arms, and pressed her lovely form to my heart.

How happy we were at that moment! How happy! Ah! none can tell.

The hours passed, the sea and its islands disappeared from our sight, we entered Loch Fyne. And when I beheld the deep, dark, mysterious, and solemn sheet of water that stretched itself before me, I could not restrain myself from exclaiming, as did Robert the Bruce—

“St Mary! what a scene is here!
I’ve traversed many a mountain strand
Abroad and in my native land,
And it has been my lot to tread
Where safety, more than pleasure led;
Thus many a waste I’ve wander’d o’er,
Climbed many a crag—cross’d many a moor—
But by my halidom,
A scene so rude, so wild as this,
Yet so sublime in barrenness,
Ne’er did my wandering footsteps press,
Where’er I happ’d to roam.”

The view now opened before our astonished eyes, high rocks rose from the very depths of the sea, a profound abyss opened at either side of the loch, and the wild waters urged their way, running inwards into the mainland in solemn perspective, yet ever and anon, as ocean heaves and falls, rendered visible in its far sanctuary, by the broad and flashing light reflected by the foaming surges sweeping onwards from below !

“ Where, as to shame the temples deck’d
By skill of earthly architect,
Nature herself, it seem’d would raise
A minster to her Maker’s praise !
Not for a meaner use ascend
Her columns, or her arches bend ;
Nor of a theme less solemn tells
That mighty surge that ebbs and swells,
And still, between each awful pause,
From the high vault an answer draws
In varied tune prolong’d and high,
That mocks the organ’s melody.
Nor doth its entrance front in vain
To brave old Scotland’s holy fane,
That nature’s voice might seem to say,
‘ Well hast thou done, frail child of clay !
Thy humble powers that stately shrine
Task’d high and hard—but witness mine.’ ”

The scene again changes, and now it is a vast plain that extends before our eyes, a vast plain on a rising ground, the whole seeming to rise out of the lake of the waters in which it is seen reflected,—forming truly a picture of unrivalled beauty, and one on which it is delightful to dwell even in remembrance.

This sort of scenery continues till Ardrishaig, the terminus of our trip, and where we arrived at half-past twelve o'clock.

The steamer, however, only stopped ten minutes there, after which our return journey commenced.

We dined at two in the buffet in the saloon. The meal was very good, but we were in such a hurry to get on deck again that we could hardly enjoy it.

The night came with its gigantic paces over the beautiful scene, and with it, the mist soon enveloped the whole, obscuring it from our eyes, as a dream of beauty is obscured by the fancies of our vivid imagination.

“ The evening mists, with ceaseless change,
Now clothed the mountain's lofty range,
Now left their foreheads bare,
And round the skirts their mantle furl'd,
Or on the sable waters curl'd,
Or on the eddying breezes whirl'd,
Dispersed in middle air.
And oft, condensed, at once they lower,
When brief and fierce, the mountain shower
Pours like a torrent down ;
And when returns the sun's glad beams,
Whiten'd with foam a thousand streams
Leap from the mountain's crown.”

Once more we passed the open sea, where the surface of the water is so marvellously studded with

“ All the fairy crowds
Of islands that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.”

Once more we entered the Kyles of Bute, which

looked even grander and nobler now that the shades of evening were falling fast upon the mountains, and the moon lighted with her silvery beams the projecting rocks.

Conchita took my hand in one of hers, and with the other she pointed to the moon in the east, now in her first quarter or new moon, while she said, with a melodious accent that thrilled my heart—

“See how beautiful and how pure she rises to-night in her birth over the radiant skies, she, like our love, of which she is such a good image, begins to-night to shed her serene and peaceful light, and neither clouds nor mists dare oppose her march. But to-morrow, in her last quarter, will she be still the same? Will the passing clouds and the earthly mists respect her purity? Alas! who knows!

“There is a tradition in my country, at which, of course, you will laugh, for you laugh at all superstitions, and it is that the young bride who salutes the new moon in her first quarter, when for the first time she sees her after her marriage, can ask from her what she will, and it is sure to be granted.

“I believe in this, Walter, and I ask her that our love shall not change as does her phases, and that she may shine upon us as now for ever this sweet, this loving . . . HONEYMOON!”

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST SUNDAY.

THE next day happened to be Sunday, an exceedingly heavy day in all Protestant countries, but more so in Scotland, where the fourth commandment is carried to the most absurd extremes. Nothing is done here on the Sabbath of the Lord excepting, perhaps, a few people getting drunk, which, of course, is quite in accordance with God's word, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, . . . for the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, . . . wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it!" Such is the Calvinistic way of keeping the Scriptures!

To illustrate this curious fancy, I will relate an anecdote that happened to myself on the morning of that day. It was at the hotel at Dumbarton. I had just got up, and rang the bell for some hot water for shaving. A waiter answered my call. "I want some hot water, if you please," I said.

"And for what do you want the hot water?"

"For shaving," said I.

"Ye canna have hot water on the Lord's day for sic a thing as shaving," said the waiter, horror struck at the idea. I insisted again, but with the same effect.

“Na, na,” said he, “ye canna have it.” Necessity is the mother of invention, ’tis said, and this aroused mine. I thought that if I could arrange the order in such a way that it would not affect his religious scruples, he would bring it directly. I therefore proposed that I should like some *toddy*, and told him to bring me the materials for making it, consisting of whisky, sugar, and *boiling water*. These he brought without the least demur. I gave him the whisky, which he drank, and I used the hot water !

It was the first Sunday after our marriage, and Conchita, who already began to think that she ought long before this to have thrown herself at the feet of her holy patroness, “*the blessed Virgin of the Conception*,” felt very much annoyed when she heard that there was not such an edifice in Dumbarton as a Roman Catholic chapel. Her first thought was to go to Glasgow and hear mass there. “Great God ! great God !” she exclaimed, overflowing with tears, is it possible that I have not been able to assist at the holy sacrament of the mass since my marriage !” And the superstitious young girl put the fault on me, saying, “Oh, Walter, why have you brought me to this land of heretics, where the holy religion of God is unknown !”

She cried and insisted so much about going to Glasgow, menacing me with the wrath of heaven, that at last I consented to go to the station to see if there was a train that would take us to that town. But unfortunately there was none. “The trains

don't run during the hours of divine service," said the station master, in a very dignified way.

When I carried this news back to Conchita, she became furious. "Oh Walter, it is your fault!—but all can yet be managed, let them put on a special train for us, and we shall still arrive in time."

I went again to the station, but with no better luck. "It is a matter of life and death," I ventured to say to the station master, but he looked shocked at my proposition, scandalized at the mere idea of running a train at ten o'clock on Sunday morning. "You must thank the English that we run a train on Sunday afternoon," said the Scotchman, "formerly it would have been considered a sacrilege; as for putting on a train this morning, it would be quite impossible. Go to church now, Sir, and in the afternoon we will take you to Glasgow; we are not Jews or heretics here."

More entreaties would have been useless. I offered any amount of money, for I knew that Conchita would never pardon me this, but all was useless, and I had to go back to the hotel with my dreaded answer. Fancy my being a mediator between the Roman Catholic girl and the Calvinistic station master!

Conchita would not listen to such reasons; blinded by her own superstitions, she could not understand those of other people.

I tried to reconcile her, saying, that not to hear mass under the circumstances could not be a sin, we

must therefore conform ourselves to the circumstances. "We have done all that was in our power to arrive in time at a Catholic church, and you see that it has all been useless."

"I will do penance for this," she said, "for three days I won't eat any meat, and then, perhaps, God will forgive me."

I found it hard to restrain a laugh when I heard this, it sounded so strange to my ear! but I supposed it was all right, and I said no more.

We went to the window, which looked on to a kirk, as the churches are called here. The people were going in; the service was going to begin.

My young wife was looking anxiously at them with her great dark eyes veiled with tears.

"What would you say to entering with them into that kirk?" I ventured to suggest.

"Are you mad, Walter?" she said, casting upon me an astonished look. "How can you even think of entering that place of perdition. Oh, never!——never!"

"Then, I suppose, you think that all those good people are condemned for entering that *place of perdition*, as you call their church?"

"Of course, Walter. Can you believe otherwise, and call yourself a Christian?"

"Yes," I said, "I do call myself a Christian; but before being a Christian I was born a man, and as such I cannot possibly believe that God would be less generous and just than I, and that He will punish

those poor sinners for ever, because they do not happen to belong to the Roman Church, and because they thought they were doing right in attending their church. All places are equally good to worship the Creator in. Has He not made the whole earth? Does He not dwell everywhere?"

"God is the almighty Creator, and He liveth everywhere; but he cannot dwell in those places of iniquity, where wrong doctrines are taught, and the devil is worshipped instead of the Holy Virgin."

"Is that your idea of a Protestant church?"

"Yes," she said, with firmness, "and not mine only, but that of all good Christians; and for that we ought to pray and do penance, so that we may try to save those miserable sinners that condemn themselves unawares."

"So, the penance of one washes away the sins of another?"

"Ah! Walter," she continued, without answering my sarcastic question, "when I think that so many millions of men are condemned every day for not knowing the doctrines of salvation of our mother the Church, I seem to go mad——yes, mad with desperation. Oh! if I could only suffer myself in order to save the rest of humanity, I would sacrifice myself without hesitation."

Those unselfish words, so full of faith and so disinterested, softened my heart, and made me exclaim, while I embraced her, "Oh! Conchita, how infinitely more pure and heavenly, and how much more merci-

ful, are your sentiments than those taught by your Church ! You would willingly sacrifice yourself in order to save your brethren, you, who are but a weak woman ! And can it be possible that God, who is all-powerful, and to whom it would cost nothing to make all His children happy, condemns them instead to an eternity of torments ? ”

“ Do not say such sacrilegious things, Walter. If God punishes, it is because He is obliged to punish. He can pardon the sin, but cannot do away with its consequences. His pardon, thus obtained, would be a great act of mercy on His part ; but it could not be of any use to the sinner. He must suffer for his sins before he can obtain the absolution that God will bestow upon him after his contrition and his penance. Without those, the absolution of the priest is useless. Only a very few are damned for ever ; the greater part of Christian sinners will go to purgatory, where they will do penance for their transgressions, until they are perfect enough to enter the kingdom of God.”

“ You think very well, Conchita, and your arguments are conclusive. That doctrine of purgatory is perhaps the most philosophical of those taught by the Roman Church, although I do not quite agree with it concerning the nature of the place ; in fact, I do not think it is a place at all, but rather certain conditions of the mind. But in its foundation it is quite philosophical, for none are good enough, wise enough, or spiritual enough in this world to enter all at once

into heaven. Heaven is the supreme of happiness, and none can be perfectly happy till he knows all things, is all that is good, and loves God above all.

“This love is the perfection of our spiritual life, and can only be reached when one is the possessor of supreme knowledge, supreme goodness, and spiritual exaltation, for how can a poor creature love its creator if it does not understand Him? Man may obey God’s laws, he may worship his maker, but he can only *love* him when he can understand him, and appreciate his works.

“The Catholic doctrine admits the possibility of progress after death, it does not deprive the soul of its faculties after it leaves the body, as the Protestants do ; this is the great advantage that the Church of Rome has over the reformed churches ; according to which man’s soul goes either to heaven or to hell without remission. This is very disheartening, for as no one who thinks about himself with impartiality can imagine he is good enough to go straightway to heaven, there only remains for the poor sinner the bottomless pit of hell, always open at his feet. And this has made so many good Christians exclaim, like the poor old north countryman, ‘I canna go to the church, look ’ee, they’r allus a readin o’ cusses, and damnin, and hell fire, and the like, and I canna stomach it. What for shall they go and say as all poor old wimmin o’ tha parish is gone to the deil, ’cause they picks up a stick or teu in ’e hedge, or likes to mumble a charm or teu o’er their churnin’? Them

old wimmin be rare an' good in ither things. When I broke my ankle three years ago, old Dame Stuckley kem o'er, i' tha hail and tha snow, a matter of five mile and more, and she turned o' eighty ; and she nursed me, and tidied the place, and did all as was wanted to be done, 'cause Mary was away waking somewheris ; and she'd never let me gie her aught for it. And I heard ta parson tell her as she were sold to hell ! 'cause the old soul have a bit of belief like in witch-stones, and allus sets one aside her spinnin' jenny, so that the thrid shanna knot nor break. Ta parson he said as how God cud mak tha thrid run smooth, or knot it, just as he chose, and 'twas wicked to think she could cross his will ; and the old dame, she said, " Weel Sir, I dinna b'lieve tha Almighty would ever spite a poor old crittur like me, don't ee think it ? But if we've no help ourselves i' this world, what for have He gi'ed us the trouble o' tha thrid to spin ? And why no han't he made tha shirts and tha sheets an' tha hose grow theirsells ? " And ta parson niver answered her that, he only said she was fractious and blasphemous. Now she warn't ; she spoke i' all innocence, and she mint what she said—she mint it. Parsons niver can answer ye plain, right-down, natural questions like this'n, and that's why I wanna go to the church.*

" There was more truth in his words than the old labourer knew himself. The Church of England, as

* Ouida's Puck.

that of Scotland, is not adapted to the moral wants of the men of the nineteenth century, not even to those of the most ignorant of countrymen. The reformed church left much behind it that was good and true, and for this reason, during this nineteenth century the fallen Church of Rome is rising gradually from its oppressed state, and recovering its ancient dominion ; for during the eighteenth century the influence of the Church of Rome was constantly on the downfall. Doubt made great conquests in all the Catholic countries of Europe, and in some countries it obtained a complete ascendancy. The Papal power got so weak in those times that it almost became an object of laughter for the infidels, and of pity more than hatred for the Protestants.

“ But now none who calmly reflect on what has passed in Spain, in Italy, in America, in Ireland, in the low countries, in Prussia, and even in France and England, during the last few years, can doubt that the power which the Catholic Church has over the hearts of men is, although very small, greater than it was when the *Encyclopædia* and the *Philosophical Dictionary* were first published. ‘ It is very strange,’ as Macaulay says, who, if I remember right, also thought as I do on the subject, ‘ that not the moral revolution of the eighteenth century, nor the counter-moral revolution of the nineteenth, have been able to augment the power of the Protestants. During the first period, what the Catholics lost was also lost by Christianity ; during the second, what Christianity

gained, was also gained by the Catholics. One would naturally suppose that a great many minds on their way from superstition to infidelity, or from infidelity to superstition, would have stopped at an intermediary point, but nothing of the kind. It is an historical fact, often noticed, that the Christian nations who did not adopt the principles of the Reformation before the end of the sixteenth century, have never adopted them since. The Catholic communions have become infidel since then, or they have united themselves again to the Catholic Church, but not one of them has become Protestant.'

"Thus expresses himself the great thinker of England, and with what reason. The Catholic Church has hundreds of defects and faults, and it even teaches several doctrines to which reason and philosophy is opposed, but in spite of this, it is superior to the Protestant churches, and for this reason, hundreds of Protestants turn Catholic every year.

"For several reasons the Church of Rome is superior to the reformed churches, but for none so much as for the doctrine of purgatory. The Protestants believe that those who are not good go straight to hell. Is this possible? The Catholics at least believe in an intermediate state, purgatory.

"We all must acknowledge that we are neither perfect nor good enough to enter the kingdom of God, whatever that may be; but that for this reason we must go to hell, and for all eternity, seems to me

to be rushing into the other extreme. Nobody, according to my ideas of humanity, is wicked enough to deserve an endless punishment."

"But my confessor has always told me that we are all the sons of sin, that we are born naturally wicked, and that we only differ from each other by the propensities we have towards sin. He has often told me, also," she continued, "that life is a constant struggle with sin that would precipitate us into the abyss that is always yawning at our feet, and in which we should undoubtedly perish, if it were not for the beautiful religion taught to us by Jesus, that detains us on the verge of the precipice."

"Do not believe in those blasphemies," I said. "God would be the agent of evil if he had not placed in each of our hearts the magnetic needle that is to guide us towards heaven. Our conscience is our compass, let us always steer the vessel of our lives by it over the rough seas of the world. According to the doctrine you have just mentioned, Conchita (I am going to show you its absurdity), man was alone and without a guide in the world, till the day when the Church came to correct the imperfect work of God. God made man as good as he could, I suppose, but soon afterwards, he finds Himself baffled by His own creation. He therefore sends His only Son into the world, to suffer and do penance for the sins of men. But as for all the thousands of men that died before His coming, or for those that die without hearing His word, they are condemned to eternal

damnation. All this is, according to you, very just and proper, I suppose !”

“No,” said Conchita, “God made man good, but He also made him free, and therefore He could not control his free-will. Man sins, and God must punish him accordingly. He would not be just if He did otherwise, (you see, Walter, that I put the subject quite in your style, so that it may appear most reasonable in your eyes, for you lack faith most sadly, however, I hope to give you even *that* in time). The glory of God demands the punishment of sin, heaven would not be heaven if sin were admitted therein.”

“You reason admirably, Conchita; but I must remind you that God made His children weak, innocent, and ignorant, and that He placed them in a garden of forbidden fruit, without the necessary knowledge of what was good for them. We sin, and therefore we suffer the consequences which are the punishment—but not an eternal punishment—that would be as useless as it would be cruel. God wants the sinner to be convinced of his sins, and to live; He does not want him to remain for ever in sin. We are not born, as your confessor told you, wicked; neither are we sons of sin; but we are ignorant and weak, and the world in which we live is full of temptations. The sin does not proceed from our forefather Adam, but from our inexperience. God is not baffled by His own creation, but is trying, on the contrary, to make that creation more perfect

by means of temptations that He puts in our path, in order to teach us what is really good by experience, and to develop our good qualities that would otherwise remain for ever dormant in our hearts. We fail sometimes to overcome those temptations, and we give way to what, in the eyes of men, is wickedness, though in reality it is only ignorance. This is sin.

“The devil can exist only in the imagination of the ignorant. This myth is a relic of the times when men believed in centaurs and mermaids, in sirens and fairies ; when, to account for the vicissitudes of nature, all objects, and even the elements themselves, were deified. Men were then obliged to acknowledge the existence of imaginary divinities, that presided over every mountain, river, sea and wind, in order to hide their gross ignorance respecting the phenomena of nature. Every quality was then also personified, and made into a deity : thus beauty was represented by Venus, wisdom by Minerva, good by God, and evil by the Devil. In those days of ignorance and superstition, man was taught that everything had its opposite ; and as light had its opposite in darkness, so God had His opposite in the Devil. But now we have science and reason to guide us ; and as the first tells us that light has no opposite, darkness being only a condition, not an entity—the second tells us that God can have no opposite, being almighty, and the Devil, being only a representation of evil, is not a reality.

“The same as to-day we should laugh at anyone who really believed in the existence of Venus, because there is beauty in the world; or in that of her son Cupid, because there is love therein; so we ought to laugh at those who tell us that there is a Devil in the universe, because there is sin therein.

“Temptation comes from God, and from God only, as everything that is good comes from Him; and what is there so beneficial to humanity as temptation? Temptation is the goad that helps us forward; and if it were not for this whip, that wakes the sleeping man, he would remain slave to his instinct, as the animals eating the grass of the prairies and the fruit of the wild woods. It is the temptation of living better that made him discover the grain of corn, domesticate the animals, raise the hut, cultivate his intellect.

“America tempted Columbus in his dreams, and a new world was obtained by this temptation. The hope of deciphering the enigma of human life tempted Pythagoras, and speculative philosophy appeared in the world. The ambition of Cæsar tempted him to conquer northern Europe, and with his armies he carried the civilization of the great empire of Rome to the wildest regions of the world. Guttenberg was tempted with the desire to render human thought permanent, and from this temptation proceed these types that now meet your eye. Could anyone but God have tempted man to do such things?

“It is true that temptations lead man sometimes

to sin ; but even this is as good as a lesson to him. He may fail twenty times in doing a thing, but if he persevere he will most certainly do it at last. Sin proceeds from our ignorance, not from a mythological devil. God can know no rivals, for

“All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul ;
That changed through all, and yet in all the same ;
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame ;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glowes in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent ;
Spreads undivided, operates unspent ;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart ;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns :
To Him no high, no low, no great, no small ;
He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all.’ *

“ Yes, as Lamartine expresses it :—

“ ‘ *Le monde en s’éclairant s’élève à l’unité.* ’ ”

* Pope’s “ Essay on Man.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

CONCHITA looked at me in silence. She could not deny the truth of my words, although they were so contrary to the doctrines she had learned in the convent. But she had a pure and investigating mind, and very good common sense. She believed with a blind faith in the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, but still she wished to hear what there was to be said against them.

This gave me courage, and after a brief pause, I began as follows:—

“I told you just now that I thought the Roman Catholic religion preferable in a great many points to the Protestant, but I must also tell you that I do not quite agree with it in every respect. You, my darling wife, will undoubtedly see, with your clear sense of what is right and just, that the Church that you believe infallible is far from satisfying the inquiring minds of the men of the nineteenth century ; it was based, by the early fathers of the church (who, you must admit, did not enjoy the scientific light of the nineteenth century) on the teachings of Christ, and you know that these teachings were not *final*, for Christ

said to his disciples that he had more to tell ('other things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now,') and why did he not tell them all at once? Because, as he said, they could not have comprehended him; because all teaching must be gradual; it would be impossible for a boy to begin at the top of the class, and much less at the top of the highest class. He must climb up step by step, and gain each step by his own labour before he makes it his own: each truth that he masters enables him to see a higher truth beyond, for as Carlyle said, 'The goal of yesterday will be the starting-point of to-morrow.'

"It is impossible for *man* ever to see the creator as he really is, he can only learn by degrees to see him in his *works*, and these are only now beginning to be comprehended by man; thus you see that each century of progress serves to lift a little corner of the veil of ignorance that hides him from mortal sight. The tendency of man is ever to make God in his own image, as man improves he will improve the image that he forms in his own mind, therefore his God will be grander and greater as man advances in knowledge and wisdom. Even St Augustin, the great father of the Roman Church, was obliged to acknowledge this, and thus he said in these true words which the modern church is so apt to forget, that 'the councils that take place in particular regions, or in provinces, must submit without any difficulty to the authority of the general councils formed by the whole of the Christian world; and even these general

councils themselves are often corrected by those which follow them (*sæpe priora posterioribus emendari*) when what before was hidden is discovered by experience, and what was then unknown is at last known.'—*De Bapt.*, lib. II., c. iii.

“ Thus, had Christ said all that he could have said at that time, had he even pictured to them the God we behold to-day, his hearers would not have comprehended him.

God is God from the creation ;
 Truth alone is man's salvation :
 But the God that now you worship, soon shall be
 Your God no more ;
 For the soul in its unfolding,
 Evermore its thought remoulding,
 Learns more truly in its progress
 How to love and to adore.

“ But the Christianity that is taught in the churches now-a-days is not, by a great deal, that which Jesus taught in Judea one thousand eight hundred years ago ; and as I have heard several great thinkers observe, ‘ if he were to come *into* the world again, the first thing he would do would be to reform modern Christianity.’

“ The change effected in the Christian doctrines has nevertheless come about most naturally.

“ When St Paul and the other apostles introduced the new religion into Rome and her empire, they adorned it, so to speak, with the doctrines of the pagan ; and when later on, in the time of Constantine and his mother Helena, it was established de-

nitively in the city of the Cæsars, by far the greater part of its rites and ceremonies were Pagan. These have naturally remained among the Latin races, to which they were so well adapted; while the Jewish ones, which in the same way had been grafted on the Egyptian, that were dictated to quite another race of men, perished and were forgotten. Later on, Luther and the other reformers tried to establish anew the old and primitive Christianity, and with some success. The same, more or less, had occurred in the first centuries of the Church in the time of Arian, and again, later on, when the Greek Church was divided from that of Rome. St Athanasius and St John Chrisostomus first thought of this change, which, however, was opposed by St Augustine and St Ambrosius, who were for the Latin Church. The effigies of these four doctors sustain the chair of St Peter in the Vatican, in commemoration that it is to them we owe the popular theology of the modern Church. To them we must also add St Paul, St Jerome, St Benitus, St Thomas of Aquino, and all the other doctors of the Church.

“These were the real authors of the doctrines now taught by Rome. It is to them and to their successors that we owe those absurd and unphilosophical dogmas that make of God a hard taskmaster, of man a condemned sinner, of religion a narrow and bigoted creed, of life a curse, and of immortality a probable Hell!

“The fault, however, does not lie with them; or at

least let us suppose that they believed in what they taught, as Torquemada and Calvin believed in their most cruel, unholy, and dreadful doctrines. All those men were honest, and worked for what they, in their blind ignorance and superstition, considered the good of humanity. But how mistaken they were! How sad the results! They only drew the outline of what their successors afterwards painted with the most vivid colours; they only proposed that of which the others have made dogmas; and thus gradually this ill-called Christian philosophy has been growing, till it has come to be what we find it to-day.

“The Christian religion now-a-days, as taught by the Church, is still the agglomeration of all the early theologies, doctrines and philosophies, good and bad, that were entertained by the ancient fathers of the Church; and, as the priests have often told you, I dare say, dear Conchita, they believe that there is no love of God, no human pity, no morality, nor even hope of any kind, but in the bosom of the Church. He who does not belong to one or other of the Christian Churches is said to be an atheist and a heretic. One can only enter paradise, they say, through the doors of their Churches. But through which? Which is the true Church of Christ? This is the question that men ask every day in their hearts. Which is the true religion? If you ask the Catholics, they of course will tell you that they are the real Christians, the only sons of the Holy Church of God, and the only disciples of Christ. If you ask a Pro-

testant, he will say, 'We possess the Word of Jesus, we have an open Bible before us, and we follow those sacred writings. Out of the canons of the Church of England there is no salvation; the Anglican Church (or the Scotch, if he happen to be a Scotchman; or the German, if he is from that country) is the only true Christian Church.' If you ask the same question of a Greek, of a Unitarian, of a Lutheran or a Calvinist, his answer will be more or less the same—'Our doctrines are the only true ones, and out of our Church there is no chance of salvation.' The man of the nineteenth century who is in search of a religion can be compared to a traveller who in his journey comes to a spot where several roads meet. He wonders which road he should follow, and at last determines to ask the question of a group of men that he meets. 'Which is the road that conducts to the port of heaven?' Upon which they all begin to quarrel, and to point to quite opposite roads, saying as loud as they can, 'That——that——that is the only road that leads to heaven; the others lead to quite opposite places.' The poor traveller is bewildered; he does not know which road to follow, and at last exclaims, 'Settle among yourselves first, my good men, which is the true road, and then come and tell me.'

"All modern religions have their truths, and yet how far they all are from *the truth* !

"The priests teach superstition, not philosophy. This has been said very often, and even the Church itself has owned to it. Christianity cannot pass, in its

actual state, for a philosophy ; for the modern philosophers do not acknowledge it. They laugh at the dogmas of Rome, and at the articles of the Anglican Church ; they ridicule the orthodoxy of the Czar and of the synod of Athens. Modern Christianity, I am sorry to tell you, darling Conchita, is a religion that lacks reason and unity. With its false doctrines concerning God, man, and the relations between the two, how can one hope that the scientific or philosophic world will ever join this Church ? Would it be possible for a good and intelligent man to believe in the existence of a God who is unjust and capricious, who has made a wicked and powerful being, in order that he might tempt His children, as He ordered him to tempt His servant Job, and that if it were not for the sacrifice of Christ, He would send all men to hell ? Could a philanthropist believe that His God hates all sinners, and that He intends condemning them to endless punishment, when *he* would gladly sacrifice himself for his fellow-creatures, and when *he* is unhappy if he sees his brethren suffering even in this life ? How can mortal man believe in a God who is less humane and more capricious and selfish than the worst amongst themselves ? Would it be possible for a man of science to believe in the infallibility of the Church, when Galileo and so many others have proved its ignorance ; or believe in the infallibility of the Bible, which is the basis of the Protestant religion, when geology, astronomy, chemistry and history have given testimony to its want of knowledge ?

Can a good woman, who loves her children, believe in the goodness of the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses ?

“ Could Strauss ever believe in the divine source of the Jewish Bible, or Voltaire in that of the church ? Yet you may just as well pretend that they could, if you pretend that the others would. Is there a priest that could convince Newton that the Holy Ghost is speaking through him when he tells him that the sun goes round the earth ?

“ There are things that the most devoted friends of the Church cannot explain, and not even you, my dear one, can contradict what I have just said.

“ The foundation upon which the Christian Church is based cannot possibly last much longer. The philosophers, the philanthropists, cannot believe in the dogmas of such a religion ; their consciences do not allow them to believe in doctrines which are so opposed to their common sense, and to what they hold to be truth. The Church rests upon two columns, ignorance and faith. This is enough for those who do not read, who do not think for themselves, and for those who from habit let the church guide their consciences ; but for those who dare to raise their eyes and scrutinize the truth of the doctrines they are taught, and for those who study the works of God as seen in modern science and philosophy, the Christian Church is not sufficient, and they leave it, but whither to go ? Their reason has carried them thus far, but they want something to satisfy it ;

they pull down the Latin church in their hearts, and they find themselves all at once in a desert with none to guide them. This is why there exists so many athiests in the world.

“The same takes place more or less in all the churches. But this picture is, however, more true of the Catholic Church than of the Protestant.

“Be it because the members of this church are in their greater part more studious, and less devout, or be it because its doctrines are more modern, and better adapted to the wants of the age, I know not, but such is the case. The Catholics must conform themselves to what the Pope and his bishops think fit to teach them; the Greeks and the Russians to what their holy synods say about religion; all the three hold their respective powers to be infallible, and they are not allowed to doubt of the truth of the dogmas taught by them. The Protestants have also the Bible, which they think infallible, but this book needs an interpretation, and every one is authorized to interpret it according to his judgment; from this proceed the innumerable Protestant sects. The Anglican Church, which as the national Church is the most important, must conform itself to the doctrines of its bishops and its archbishops, and to the dogmas sanctioned by the English primate. This gives an interpretation wide enough to the Bible, but from which none of its members must depart. This interpretation after revising, retranslating, correcting, and even changing parts of the scriptures, has formed a sort of conformity

between the ancient Jewish sciences, modern science, and modern discoveries; conformity that would surely astonish the Jews of a thousand years ago, if they could only see it. But even after all this, the Bible cannot be quite reconciled with modern science. No matter how they retranslate and interpret the Bible, they will never be able to harmonise the thoughts of a barbarous and half-civilised race with the proved truths of a grand civilisation like ours. It would be easier to convert the Jerusalem of the first century into the London of the nineteenth.

“To prove to you the insufficiency of modern churches, and the little power they are able to exercise over the minds of the people, I will repeat to you an anecdote from the biography of the great mathematician Euler, that Arago, the astronomer, related in the chamber of deputies of Paris in the session of the 23d of March 1837; since then it has appeared in several works, and Camille Flammarion copied it in his beautiful work that you, of course, must have read, ‘*Les merveilles célestes.*’

“Euler, the great mathematician, was a very pious man. One of his friends, the clergyman of a church in Berlin, said one day to him, ‘Religion is utterly lost; faith has no longer any basis to rest upon; the hearts of our day are no longer moved, no, not even when they hear the marvels of the creation. Would you believe it, I have presented this great doctrine before the minds of my congregation in all its beauty, in all its most poetic and marvellous points; I have cited

the ancient philosophers, and even the Bible. Would you believe it? Half my congregation listened to me unmoved, and the other half either went to sleep or left the church.'

" 'Do next time what I am going to propose to you,' answered Euler, 'instead of describing the world as did the Greek philosophers, or the Bible, describe it as the astronomers do, lift the veil that conceals the universe from their eyes as the religious descriptions have done. In the sermon heard with so much indifference, I suppose you made of the sun a body equal to the Peloponnesus, as does the doctrine of Anaxagoras. Well, next time, tell your congregation that, according to exact measurements, our sun is one million four hundred thousand times larger than the earth.

" 'I suppose you have also spoken of heavens of glass. Say that they exist no longer in the immensity of space wherein the stars move. The planets, according to your explanation, only differ from the stars in size and movement. Tell them that they are worlds, that Jupiter is one thousand four hundred times larger than the earth, and Saturn seven hundred times. Describe the wonders of its rings, and speak of the number of moons that those worlds possess.

" Speaking of the stars, do not cite distances ; such high numbers as you would be obliged to use would not be appreciated. Take light as a scale of velocity, say that it travels seventy thousand leagues a second ; add to this that there is no star whose light comes to

us in less than three years ; that there are some whose light takes at least thirty years in traversing the space that divides them from us. Passing from these true statements to those that are very probable, say to them that the greater number of stars would be visible several millions of years after their disappearance from their place in space, because the light that comes from them takes millions of years in coming to our earth.'

"Such was, in a few words, with the modification of some numbers only, the advice that Euler gave to his friend, and which he followed. Instead of the world of fable and the Bible, the priest taught the world of science. Euler awaited his friend impatiently. He arrived at last with his eyes cast upon the ground, and in a state that indicated desperation. The great mathematician, astonished, exclaimed, 'Great God, what has happened?'—'Ah ! Mr Euler,' said the minister, 'I am the most unfortunate of men ! they have forgotten the respect they owed to the holy Church ; they have become excited, and they have . . . *applauded* me.'

"This simple story, Conchita, tells you plainly the sentiments of modern times. The Germans slept during the Catholic sermons, but they applauded the scientific discourses. The world of science was much grander than that of the church, and its teachings belonged to the age, while those of the priest belonged to a past civilization.

"From this want of harmony proceeds the degene-

ration in which we find the church to-day. The great men of the times, the great politicians, philosophers, and men of science do not, in their hearts, belong to any of the Christian churches.

“ The great men of ancient Rome were not Pagan, although this was the religion of their country ; they were too much advanced for that. Christianity came, and, as late as the eighteenth century, all the great men and philosophers sustained the church. Solis, Fray Luis of Granada, Luis of Leon, Bacon, Newton, La Place, Pascal, and Leibnitz were defenders and sustainers of the Christian church, because this was on a par with their intelligence. But to-day, is the Church of Rome, or that of Russia, or even those of Germany and England, sustained by the philosophers or great men of the age? No, nor Humboldt, nor Littré, nor Von-Buch, nor Vogt, nor Stuart Mill, nor Lessing, nor Kant, nor Sir Humphrey Davy, nor Hegel, nor Goëthe, nor Byron, nor Schiller, nor Fichte, nor Guilmain, nor Flammario, nor Figuier, nor Michelet, nor Boucher de Perthes, nor Victor Hugo, no, not one of the great men of modern times is, or was, what the church would call a true Christian.

“ From hence comes the great lack of religion that we experience at every movement. The greater part of the people, it is true, content themselves with the religion taught in the churches, although they may sometimes pause and reflect after reading some scientific work, but when one thinks about the truth

of their teachings, when one dares to lift that sacred veil that hides from the world the unfitness of their belief, and which is wrongly called faith, then one sees plainly enough the backwardness and the mockery of this religion. How different is the Christianity of modern times from that simple but sublime doctrine taught by Jesus on the Mount of Olives ! Rome has always covered her shortcomings with the pomp of her ceremonies, for the court of the Vatican, that you are taught to believe in as a holy and divine institution, is but a weak and miserable political hole. The church needs the state to sustain its truths. Ah ! if it had not been for French guns, she would long ago have been obliged to fly from Rome. The faith of the people was not found enough to sustain the Papal throne, no, nor even their cannons ! Rome is no longer what she was once, and her policy has also changed. But if it has changed, it is only because she can no longer command men's consciences as before ; the people would rise in a mass, and would destroy the tyrant. One cannot now play with impunity with the lion of the populace. The clergy know it, and think it better to amuse him, while they endeavour to chain him anew. The church is as intolerant in reality as ever she was, and if she could, this very day she would exterminate all those who believe in other religions contrary to her own.

“ This is the case with all Churches, just as much in the Christian, as in the Mussulman, Budhist, and Brahmist, the general tendency of them all is to bind

the minds of the people, and to make them slaves of their will. Power is the magnet that attracts them all, and to obtain it they would not mind destroying everything that comes in their way, for is it not destruction to bind down and fetter human thought and understanding, which God made to be free ?

“ Christianity in its actual state cannot be a lasting religion ; for its doctrines are opposed to the conscience and to the morals as well as to science. Its object is not to make men better, nor to advance the civilisation of the world ; its desires are not the happiness of humanity here or hereafter. According to the doctrines of the Church itself, religion serves only to appease the anger of God, to liberate man from the devil, and to save him from hell. Human reason refuses to believe in the anger and injustice of God ; our conscience tells us there can be no personal devil in the universe, and science destroys the idea of a hell of fire. Now, if those doctrines are false ; if the anger of God, the existence of the devil, and the belief in a hell are unfounded, and impossible doctrines ; what is the use of this Church ?

“ As religion is represented in opposition to reason and to nature, it is not to be wondered at that so many people abandon all kinds of religion, and become atheists. At least, they say, atheistic views *pretend* to be philosophical, while the Catholic ones are against reason and common sense. Pantheism, that holds nature as God, is a much more natural and philosophical belief than the Catholic one, which

represents its God with the passions and the propensities of a demon. The atheists are at least more philosophical than the Christians, for these acknowledge three gods and fear the power of a fourth, the devil; and the Catholics, moreover, worship an enormous list of virgins, saints and angels, a kind of smaller gods who exercise a miraculous but limited power upon the world, as did the gods of the Grecian mythology; while the others, although they deny the existence of *one God*, recognise in His stead the universal laws of nature. You know too well, however, dear Conchita, my opinion concerning atheistic doctrines, for me to enlarge on them now, in proving to you their utter falsity, and how much I despise and pity them; but I only say this to let you see how utterly unphilosophical the doctrines of the Catholic religion must be when I *even* venture to contrast them with such.

“But I must go on with my criticism. The God of your Church, Conchita, does not govern the world by means of natural and constant laws, but by miracles and a supernatural power, infringing upon and stopping the action of the established laws whenever He pleases. Thus the prayer of a poor mortal can change the order of the universe, and the faith of a man can, as it has done once, stop the sun and the moon in the middle of their course.*

“The God of the Christians is not omnipotent, as some who knowing the doctrines taught in the Bible

* Joshua x. 13.

still dare to assert.* It is also quite a mistake to say that He is everywhere ; for, according to the Churches, He is only to be found in heaven and in the temples, in spite of what David said in his 139th Psalm. According to the priests, however, God only lives in heaven, and comes down to earth sometimes, but this only in the churches. He is never present anywhere else. This idea is a very old one, and, I suppose, is derived, like all others, from the Bible, where we hear Him say, ‘I have chosen this place to myself for a house (the temple). . . . Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attend unto the prayer that is made in this place. For I have chosen and sanctified this house . . . and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually ;’† where He ‘came down to see the city and tower of Babel ;’‡ and where, we are told, He descended upon Sodom and Gomorrah, saying, ‘Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me ; and if not, I will know ;’§ and where we are told that ‘Adam and his wife *hid* themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.’||

“This doctrine may be very ancient and very Biblical, but it does not suit modern science, which needs a God present in all parts, and who does not need to go up or come down in order to see the works of men, nor

Judges i. 19, etc. † 2 Chronicles vii. 12-16. ‡ Gen. xi. 5.
§ Gen. xviii. 20, 21. || Gen. iii. 8.

to lead them for forty years in the wilderness, in order to ‘know what was in their hearts.’* The actions of this God are moreover interested, and proceed only from His desire of glorifying Himself. How mean is this idea of the Deity compared with the words of Lord Byron, ‘From the far distant archipelago of stars to the tranquil lake that kisses the feet of the mountain, everything partakes of an intense life, in which there is not a ray, a breeze, a leaf, that does not owe its existence to the great Creator!’

“ ‘Oui, c’est un Dieu caché que le Dieu qu’il faut croire ;
Mais tout caché qu’il est, pour révéler sa gloire,
Quels témoins éclairants elevant moi ressemblés !
Répondez, cieux et mers ; et vous, terre, parlez !’

as said Racine ; or, as your great poet Melendez Valdés expresses it, in his beautiful poem, ‘La presencia de Dios :’

“ ‘Doquiera que los ojos
Inquieto torno en cuidadoso anhelo,
Allí gran Dios, presente
Atónito mi espíritu te siente.
.
.
.
.
.
Tu inmensidad lo llena
Todo, Señor, y más, del invisible
Insecto al elefante,
Del átomo al cometa rutilante.’

“ Yes, my beloved one, the worlds that the telescope opens before our eyes, showing us the sidereal regions, as that discovered by the microscope in a drop of dew, all breathe life ; from the colossal globe of Sirius,

* Deut. viii. 2.

whose diameter is of 4,500,000 leagues (twelve times larger than our sun), to the infusoria, microscopic animalculæ, ten millions of which do not take more room than a grain of corn, everything gives testimony of the supreme power and of the omnipresence of God. And can we believe, after this, in what the Church *reveals* to us about Him, and which would make Him so small in our eyes?

“Science cannot recognise a limited and local God. It proves to us, on the contrary, that God is uniform and perfect, just and good, and that He governs the universe by means of determined and constant laws. Astronomy reveals to us the immensity of space, the infinity of the universe, the myriads and myriads of worlds that move in it, all governed by infallible laws, established by the Supreme Creator. Natural history and geology relate to us the history of the earth, and show to us its smallest inhabitants, of which some are so minute, that 10,000 could be ranged on the length of an inch! And certain species are so small, that their whole bodies do not equal the 1500th part of a millimetre, about the forty-fifth thousandth part of an inch! Every drop of water contains in itself more inhabitants than there are in the world, and every grain of dust is peopled by millions of animalculæ; the very air we breathe is full of its minute creatures, and some of these can produce in four days more than 150,000 millions of their species! The divine creation knows no end. Could its Divine Author be a jealous and angered

God, who delights in the sufferings of His children? No, science will never recognise such a God.

“Science denies this wrong idea of the Creator, because it is against philosophy, philanthropy rejects it because it is immoral and wicked. So it is not so much to be wondered at, that many adopt the doctrines of Comte, thinking his teachings more elevated and reasonable than the Christian polytheism of St Augustine and St Thomas of Aquinas.

“Let us examine the dogma of immortality as it has been, and is taught by the Church.

“If what the theologians of Rome tell us respecting the immortality of the soul were true, this law would undoubtedly be the greatest malediction that God could impose upon His children; annihilation itself would be preferable. According to them, very few indeed are those who are saved at all, and even those few must pass through the hell-like torments of purgatory; all the rest are sent to hell, where they suffer for evermore—and this, in almost every case, not because they have sinned, but simply because they did not belong to the only Church that could save them.

“At the present day, according to your great geographer, Sanchez de Bustamante, there are one thousand one hundred and forty-five millions of men in the world, of which only two hundred millions are Catholics, and therefore the only ones who can have any chance whatever of being saved: this according to the

Catholics; for, according to the Protestants, that number does not exceed eighty-five millions (which is more or less the number of their faithful);* all the rest of humanity goes to hell, good and bad—and this without counting the poor wretches who died before Christ's time. But besides this, even the Catholics must be first elected by the Father, loved by the Son, and blessed by the Holy Ghost, before they can enter the kingdom of God, of which St Paul said we are all heirs, 'co-heirs of Christ.' This, in round numbers, comes to be, that only *one* of every *one hundred thousand* men that live this day in the world will ever be saved.

Some priests tell us that one of the pleasures, perhaps the greatest, of the reclaimed will be to see the sufferings of their brethren amidst the fires of hell. According to St Augustine and the greater part of the fathers of the church, also according to Calvin and his followers, this eternal torment will add glory to God, and will teach his faithful how thankful they ought to be to his mercy, when they see themselves happy, and in heaven; while their neighbours and friends, and even their very children, who were not a bit worse than themselves when on earth, are condemned to eternal sufferings in hell.

How a good man can find pleasure in seeing his friends, his family and even his children suffering eternal torments, and how he can have a heart after this to thank God for his justice, I leave it to the

* *Geographia General.* Bustamante. Madrid, 1864.

great theologians to explain. I, myself, can conceive of no man bad and inhuman enough to act and feel so barbarously.

“You talk of free will and of our intelligence, but you forget that the church does not allow us to think for ourselves, and teaches that she alone is the soul of Christianity; that we must all think and do as she bids us, without making use of our own free will and intelligence: the priests alone are authorized to preach religion and morality in Catholic countries, but they certainly are not the first to practice what they preach, and are generally quite as ignorant and as faulty as the rest of the population. Christianity, the priests tell us, obliges us to sacrifice everything to the dogmas of the church: ‘Out of the church of Christ there is no salvation.’ Thus, making people afraid of God and of his anger, and afraid of the devil and his hell, the church establishes herself as the only arbitrator of our fates; if any one wants to be saved, he has only two things to do, to have many masses said for his soul, and to leave all his money when he dies to the Church. The natural result of this is, that now-a-days by far the greater part of Christians pay the church to think for them, to do penance for them, and to save them in the last day. Thus the wicked are not afraid of hell. They pay the priest, they sustain the church of Christ with their gold, and he cannot do less than pardon their crimes, and charge this church to excuse their conduct before the world, and even before God himself.

Could the church possibly condemn, or even blame the conduct of a man and a Christian, when she is sustained by his gold and his influence? No; she could not afford to do this, it would be against her own interests; she must tolerate the vices of her faithful, as Rome tolerated anciently the villainous conduct of the Knight Templars who defended her rights. How could she refuse twenty mistresses to a man who renounced a wife to serve her? This is the case to-day. The wicked man does not fear the devil, nor even doubt of his own salvation, while a hundred pounds remain in his pocket with which to buy absolution. The church is not in a state to be able to refuse it to any one, no, not even to those who call themselves her most faithful servitors; and therefore, she must conform herself with the conduct of those on whom she leans for support.

“A great many weak and corrupted spirits shrink from religion during the whole of their lives, and they laugh at it, while they think themselves far away from hell; but when they feel their last moment approaching, they send for the confessor, they repent, they generously pay the Church the debts contracted during their lives with the money they no longer need, and in five minutes are changed into beings of angelic purity, and may count the next moment upon heaven as their everlasting home. Thus, we may sow a lifetime of sin, and, according to your church, reap an eternity of happiness; sow to the flesh and reap life everlasting. This, I must say, is very convenient, but

I scarcely need tell you that it is very far from being in conformity with the religion of Jesus! The greater part of Christians, however, are cowards, and are afraid that death may come when least expected; they are, therefore, always ready to pay a part of the price of their salvation. I suppose they find this an easier and cheaper method, but in the end it comes to very much the same thing—gold is in every case the key to heaven's door.

“This happens in every church, although in some the ways are different, but the end is always the same. If it were not for this conduct, which, after all, is but natural on the part of men, no church could subsist; no one would go to their services, no one would believe in their dogmas, and no one would pay their priests and ministers. By far the greater number of Christians are so only under these conditions, and go to church not because they love God, but because they fear the devil. You see, my dear, that however often the priests have told you that the Church is the Church of the blessed, they are sadly mistaken, for what can be more false and injurious than the doctrines she teaches?

“By far the greater part of the iniquities and atrocities practised upon mankind now-adays have their origin in the doctrines of the Church; her very ministers themselves give us the example. If the Church, purported to have been established by God himself to teach men the best road to heaven, tolerates and forgives those atrocities, who is to condemn them? The law punishes, but cannot teach the consequences of vice.

The Church says that her office is to save men from the anger of God, for this an absolution or a plenary indulgence from Rome is enough. But it is not enough; our own conscience tells us that it is not enough. Sin must have its punishment, crime and penalty are cause and effect. I cannot drink intoxicating drinks, and another get drunk for me; I cannot take poison, and another die for me; I cannot sin and Christ suffer the penalty for me. Does any one believe that after death one remains so perfect, so wise, and so good, that he can enter at once into celestial happiness, even if during one's life one has been most exemplary, can any of us feel that we are capable of heaven? No; priests know very well that this is impossible; a moment's repentance cannot wash away the stains of a whole life-time of sin; no absolution from Rome can change the nature of man. If he is a sinner, he must first learn the consequences of sin by experience before he can give it up, and then he must learn and accustom himself to do good before his former sins can be washed away and forgiven. Years are necessary to operate this change, and only experience and expiation can work it. Could the spirit of a Tropmann be changed all of a sudden into that of a St Vincent de Paul? Who can imagine that the soul of Mrs Manning can be changed instantly after death so as to become as pure and as holy as that of Mrs Fry? In this world we take very good care not to give an important post to a villain because he comes on his knees to us saying that he repents of

his past conduct. Repentance is of no avail in a court of justice. Why should it be otherwise in heaven? The moral laws surely cannot be less strict there than they are here?

“But this is not the only evil caused by this theology; it also stops the progress of humanity in many other respects. The Churches, particularly those of Rome and Greece, are opposed to the education of mankind; their object is not to instruct and make humanity better, but to save it from God’s anger and the fire of hell; for this the more ignorant the people are the better. To reach heaven it is not necessary to know the moral or physical laws of nature; to know and keep the commandment of the Church is enough, they say, but they forget that there are other commandments as important as those given by Moses to his people. It is true that we do not want any masters to teach us those commandments, our reason would teach them; but the Church wants to do away with reason, and, unfortunately, the greater part of men need some one to help them to keep these moral laws. All this is forgotten by the Church.

“Theology, as taught in the churches, with its extraordinary doctrines concerning the creation of the universe, its government, and the laws of nature, and with its false ideas respecting God, man, and the relation between the two, cannot possibly be the religion of the philosopher nor of the educated man; so the Church very naturally thinks it best to keep her people in the grossest ignorance.

“The Church and the Pope are the oracles of the Catholics, and they all must submit to their rule; the Bible is the oracle of the Protestants, and they must all believe in its infallibility. History denies the infallibility of them all, and tells us how one Pope contradicts another, and how wicked some of them have been; it also shows us the innumerable errors and contradictions of the Bible, and its most doubtful origin. History, therefore, destroys theology, as all other sciences do, so that we must either believe in what we know to be untrue or refuse to admit the testimony of proved science.

“But it is not the revelations of science alone that are against those doctrines; our own sentiments are, or ought to be, opposed to them.

“The Church presents religion to us under such an aspect that I find it impossible for me to love and respect it; its ministers tell us to fear God, and they are right; they know very well that it would be impossible for us to love Him such as they paint Him to us. Theology, with its irritated and jealous God, who punishes the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third or fourth generation, who hates them, who prefers to punish them for ever, and to curse instead of blessing them, with its poor and malignant idea of humanity, with its teachings about the mutual relationship of the two, and with its other numerous doctrines concerning the devil, hell, purgatory, absolution, heaven, limbo, infallibility, and worship of images, is opposed to all human sentiments. And yet you

will say that there are a great many millions who do believe in Rome and in its doctrines. Yes, I cannot deny that, but whether they believe in them in their hearts, or only in outward appearance, I do not dare to say ; but there is one thing that I can assure you of, and that is, that the generality of them either ignore the natural and physical laws, or do not understand the nature of the doctrines they follow so blindly.

“ The greater part by far of those who call themselves Christians have no idea of the doctrines that their churches really teach them ; they follow them because their fathers did so before them, and because they have been educated in them since their earliest youth, and know no better ; for them religion is custom more than anything else ; they go to church every Sunday and listen respectfully to sermons, but they never stop to think of what they have heard, nor what signify those gorgeous religious ceremonies they attend so regularly, if they happen to be Catholics. For this, the unknown language in which the divine services are performed, is their excuse ; as for the Protestants they believe that everything that is in accordance with their Bible is all right.

“ But such a religion is anything but what it should be ; it cannot satisfy the enquiring mind ; men fear always to talk about it, and it is therefore a subject rarely discussed in polite society ; *what a good sermon we have had to-day ! or I wonder who will preach to-morrow !* are about as much as we ever hear anybody say about *this*, the most important of all sub-

jects. But the priests have made it an abstract and most melancholy subject ; they have rendered it one far more to be dreaded than loved, and the consequences are that men are fast becoming less and less religious.

“ This is not the fault of man, but that of the Bible itself. Religion, according to the Old Testament, is not the elevation of man, but the worship of the Deity, and the rewards that it offers to those who follow it are the most worldly—honour, fortune, money, a long life, a numerous posterity. In the New Testament the same idea is continued, with the difference only, that as experience proved that this theory was all wrong, for riches and a long life were by no means accompanied always by virtue and obedience to the commandments, the same as adversity was not always the companion of vice, the rewards and punishments were said to be reserved for a future state. Modern Christianity is accordingly based on this new idea, and it is therefore a religion almost as selfish and worldly as the Jewish.

“ Moreover, as I remarked to you before, besides the commandments of Moses and those of the Church, there are other precepts equally important, of which there is no mention made in the Bible. These moral precepts we are very often obliged to break, if we want to obey those of Jehovah.

“ I could give you a hundred proofs of this if I had a Bible at hand, but I will nevertheless try to remember a few to show you that I am right in what I say. For instance, among men it is considered of the ut-

most importance to have a good name, and to be loved by every one; but we are told in this book, 'Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!' (Luke vi. 26) and 'Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.' (James iv. 4.)

"According to the physical laws, when one feels ill one should send for the doctor, and do all that is possible to be cured. Well, it seems God is quite opposed to this. The Bible says that King Asa called the doctors when he was ill, and confided in the science of his physicians, and, on account of this, it adds, as a punishment, 'Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.' (2 Chro. xvi. 12, 13). Of a certain woman who, the New Testament says, 'for twelve years suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,' but straightway was healed through faith. (Mark v. 25-29). And there is this express injunction, 'Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.' (James v. 14).

"Lawyers, according to the conventional interpretation of the Bible, are little better. 'Woe unto you lawyers!' it says, 'for ye load men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with

one of your fingers. Woe unto you lawyers !' (Luke xi. 45-52).*

"The philosophers are not considered any better either. 'Beware lest any man spoil you with philosophy and vain deceit.' (Col. ii. 8).

"Science is also said to be wicked and irreligious. St Paul said to the Corinthians, with contempt, 'The Greeks seek after wisdom.' (1 Cor. i. 22). And to Timotheus, 'Guard thyself from vain babblings and oppositions of science, falsely so called.' (1 Tim. vi. 20). For 'knowledge puffeth up.' (1 Cor. viii. 1).

"You see, my Conchita, that if we were to follow literally all the commandments of the Bible, the progress of humanity would stop. If science has flourished, it has not been because helped by religion, but, on the contrary, in spite of the Bible's direst opposition. It is true it does not recognise any material necessities. According to its teachings, we ought to have nothing to do with doctors, lawyers, philosophers, men of science, &c., &c. But if religion can do without them because 'its kingdom is not of this world,' we cannot.

"You see now, Conchita of my heart, that this religion is not at all adapted for our present state of civilization, for, as Christ himself assured us, none can belong to it unless he 'hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also.' (Luke xiv. 26).

"The Christian religion, therefore, you see plainly,

* Jesus probably meant the interpreters of the law of Moses.—*Author's note.*

is only meant to save people from God's anger and hell's fire. But I have proved to you that God can never be angry, and that there cannot be such a thing as a hell of fire; so this religion is perfectly useless. We do not want now to die of fright like little children, thinking about that God so much to be feared, and that dreadful bogie and his hot abode of flames. We want something better than this false fear, and this coward selfishness of the future that lies before us. Death is no longer a thing to be dreaded. We ought, on the contrary, to be taught to meet it confidingly, we ought to be taught to be good fathers, sons, brothers, and friends, that, when we die, we may feel assured that we shall be saved without the need of the prayers of the church; and that what we call death is but the entrance into a far higher life—our last day on earth is really a birthday. If religion made men what they should be, what they were called to be, rest assured, my beloved wife, that at their death they would all see the kingdom of God.

“One example of the evil the church has done with her wrong ideas and teachings, is to be found in Spain. If it were not for Rome, who has impeded the progress and the instruction of the Spanish people, do you believe that Spain, your beautiful country, would have been in her present sad and fallen condition? Oh Conchita! *faith* is all very well, but you should never trample down *reason*; the *heart* ought not to be everything in the body, for the head has got its part to play in the constitution of the whole.”

CHAPTER IX.

FAITH AND REASON.

CONCHITA waited in silence till I had quite finished my long discourse, and then with a deep sigh she began.

“I have heard with patience all your scruples and objections to our holy church, they, I must confess, do not prove to me that the church is wrong, but rather that you are very much mistaken in your ideas upon this subject.”

I smiled and said, “My darling Conchita, if you could prove to me that I am mistaken in my judgment, if you could show me where I am wrong, I would most decidedly forget my scruples, and my doubts, and believe with blind faith in your religion, which I would be the first to defend, if I could bring myself to think its doctrines true.”

“I have yet strong hopes of your conversion, Walter, and if you would not doubt every thing, and ask the why and the wherefore of everything, I think I could make of you the most devout of Catholics. Doubt is a wide open door, by which one can arrive at the truth, or get away from it. For him who is in error, it is the first step towards the truth; but for him who possesses the truth, it is a slope that leads to perdition.

“You yourself said, that men who begin to doubt of the truth of their faith, finish by abandoning the church of God; but where to go? their worldly reason has carried them thus far, but they want something divine to rest upon, they pull down in their hearts the true religion, and they finish by finding themselves all at once in a desert, with none to guide them. Yes, doubt is a desert by which God sometimes leads man to the promised land of truth. In this desert there is not one single fountain, not a single well, where the fatigued heart can quench the devouring thirst that consumes it, and get refreshed. There is not a plant which can put a stop to the horrible hunger that is killing him; there is not a tree under the shadow of which the poor traveller can sit down and rest, or take courage to continue his weary journey. In this desert, as in those others of earthly sand, whose waves the wind revolves in every direction, the ground gives way under our feet, while intelligence is consumed by the burning rays of the sun of remorse and vanished hope.

“But you, my Walter, have reverence, although you lack belief. You love your God too much not to pray to Him for belief. True, heartfelt religious sentiments are to belief and to religion what the radiant light of mid-day is to that uncertain brightness of the aurora, that seems to fight with the darkness of the night. God has given you reverence for, and faith in, Himself, Walter. You ought to be for ever thankful to Him for this great gift of His eternal mercy.”

“And He has also given me a guardian angel in

you," I said, interrupting her, "who is to guide me to that belief I so much need; for which I shall be eternally thankful to Him."

Conchita smiled, while her beautiful eyes looked up to the blue skies to meet those of her Creator. She appeared divine in this attitude. Murillo's "*Conception*" would have looked material and earthly by the side of my beautiful *Concepcion*.*

"I am pleased, indeed, oh my husband," she said, "that I have been destined by the Almighty to convert to the truth of His holy church, such a man as you."

"It is impossible for me to prove to you the truth of the church doctrines, they can be felt, but never taught. I will try, nevertheless, to answer your scruples. As for the Bible, I can tell you nothing. I have never read it, its truths are too deep for me, as, indeed, they are for all of us, and for this reason the reading of it has not been encouraged by the church in Catholic countries. Yet I take it to be the word of God, and as such I respect it. The Protestants have tried to study it, and the consequences are, that they have abandoned the true Church or God, and sunk into innumerable errors."

"How can the Word of God," I said, "lead people into error? The Word of God should agree with His works, it should be all true, and all just, and mighty, and good, as they are, and the more I read the Bible, the less I can comprehend how He, in all

* Conchita is the familiar Spanish for the baptismal name of Maria de la Concepcion, an attribute of the Blessed Virgin, made so familiar by the beautiful paintings of Murillo.

His wisdom, could ever have written or inspired any one to write such a book."

"Let us leave the subject for the present, Walter. That you cannot understand the Bible is only a proof of what I have just told you. But religion, the Holy Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion is what I want to teach you.

"The word Religion expresses admirably the two fundamental truths of our faith. It tells us that we were separated from God, but that we are now, or can be, reunited and reconciled to Him. It tells us what we were, and what we are; it teaches us all the religious history of mankind. Through Adam's sin we were separated from God, and cast upon the earth, but through Jesus' sacrifice we are reconciled again to our Maker, and can attain the glories of heaven."

"I will not repeat to you again, my Conchita, the arguments which make me doubt of the truth of those two doctrines. I won't tell you again how unjust the dogma of the fall of man appears to me, and the pretended law that all must suffer for the sins of one. I will not repeat anew the argument by which I can prove to you positively, not the falsity of the doctrine of Christ's redemption, but the selfishness and injustice of God, if this were true."

"You may think whatever you like of this doctrine, but of its truth you cannot doubt, it is one of the mysteries of our faith; it is, in fact, the basis of the whole religion," said Conchita.

“I have read in the Bible,” I answered, “in Matthew i., that ‘Jesus shall save his people from their sins;’ in 1 Tim i., ‘Hear the word of the Lord,’ ‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;’ and in Luke xix., ‘The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.’ But this seems to me to imply that if we believe in his doctrines we shall be enlightened, and saved from darkness, our souls being improved by his teachings, which undoubtedly were very much in advance of the age. St Peter said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.’ (Acts xvi. 31). Yes, saved from the sins we would commit if we were ignorant of his divine sayings, but not from the sins we have already committed. As I have just told you, I hold it as impossible that a man can take poison and another die for him, as it would be impossible for a man to suffer for the sins committed by another man.”

“Yes for a man, that I grant you, but Christ was God Himself, and as such he was all-powerful.”

“In that I cannot possibly believe. If Christ had been God he would have said so, but, on the contrary, he said plainly, ‘My father is greater than I’ (John xiv. 28), and he called himself the Son of man. How could the Creator be the son of one of His creatures, the cause produced by the effect? It is impossible.

“If Christ had been God, moreover, would he have said, ‘If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true’ (John v. 31)?

“ Was Christ the God Almighty when he said, ‘ I can of mine own self do nothing ’ (John v. 30) ?

“ Could Christ have been God when he said, ‘ Why callest thou me good ? there is none good but one, that is God ’ (Mark x. 8).

“ Was Christ the God omnipresent when he said, ‘ I ascend unto my father, and your father, and to my God and your God ’ (John xx. 7) ? Can any one ascend to himself ?

“ Was Christ the God omniscient when he said, concerning the day of judgment, ‘ Of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, no, nor the angels which are in heaven, neither the son, but the Father ’ (Mark xiii. 32) ?

“ No, Conchita of my heart, I cannot possibly believe that Christ was God ; if I had never learned mathematics perhaps I might have believed in this doctrine, but now nobody can persuade me that three make one.”

“ Because this is a mystery of faith, and you cannot comprehend it, you will not believe in it ! This is not right, Walter. You must believe in the teachings of Christ, if not, you cannot be saved ; and fancy how we should suffer if we were to be condemned after death to dwell in different places, and never to see each other again. Oh ! Walter, try to save thyself, if it be only for my sake.” There was such devotion, and so much love and tenderness in those words, that they made me shudder. “ Even if the Catholic religion,” she continued, “ had not been re-

vealed by God himself, it would always be the best system of philosophy, and the most complete and sublime poem of the whole earth. In it alone we find the clue to the difficulties that have given so much trouble to the philosophers, and the solution of the mysteries, that they, with all their learning, have not been able to explain. Consult the philosophers about God, about man, about nature in general, and they will only give you doubtful, contradictory, and uncertain answers. To explain one mystery they will proclaim ten ; to deny a miracle, they will affirm a hundred more inexplicable and more difficult to comprehend ; in order to evade believing in the word of God, and in the doctrines of the Church, you will finish by believing in the words of man, and in the doctrines of a master.

“ If you deny the holy mystery of the Trinity, because you cannot comprehend it, and you want to believe only in a universal unity of creation, you will have to accept the even more incomprehensible mystery of pantheism ; for if it is difficult to conceive how the divine nature can be communicated to three different persons, retaining, notwithstanding, the unity of the Godhead, how infinitely more difficult is it to explain how this can be communicated to all beings, so different in their forms and so opposite in their actions, without losing the unity of action required in the universe !

“ If you refuse to admit the existence of that original sin, of which our whole lives and our present

condition give so full a testimony, you will see yourself obliged to wander in absurd and incoherent hypotheses, in order to explain where evil comes from, and how sin first appeared. For, before attributing its origin to the free will of the first man, and the temptations of the devil, you will establish its cause in God himself, thus making Him God and devil all in one.

“The dogma of the incarnation will appear to you unphilosophic, and therefore inadmissible; and yet philosophy teaches pantheism, a doctrine which is infinitely more unphilosophical and contrary to reason. For it teaches that God is, lives, feels, thinks, and works in all, in each of the innumerable beings that make up the universe; this comes from the necessity that humanity feels for the Christian dogmas, which so well satisfy the necessities of our intelligence that we cannot do without them, and that, when we deny their truth, we are obliged to supplant them by errors, which often are but absurd exaggerations of the very dogmas we want to pull down.

“And you will see in everything the truth of this. Those who deny the redemption of man by Jesus Christ, are they not obliged to put in its stead the redemption of man by man’s own blood, and to substitute brutal punishments for a heavenly forgiveness of all sins through Christ?

“Those who accuse the Church of exercising too much power over people’s minds, are they not the same who want to control men’s wills? Calvin, who accused the Church of burning people for their faith,

did he not also burn the Catholics because they did not believe in his heretical doctrines ?

“Of this I am convinced, Walter, that man’s mind never separates itself from the truth but to fall into error ; truth is as a mountain, at whose feet is opened an immense abyss where all who wander from the right path fall into eternal damnation.”

I took Conchita’s hand in mine, and after a second or so I said, “It seems to me, my darling, that you have been running down *pantheism* instead of proving the truth of Christianity. I agree with you in almost all you have said, but because philosophers are wrong in believing in *pantheism*, I do not see that the priests must necessarily be right in teaching their dogmas. I do not see at all that Christianity is a philosophy, on the contrary, it seems to me to be most unphilosophical ; nor do I see that it solves all the mysteries of nature, for it establishes others besides, of which we have no need whatever ; for instance, the doctrine of the Trinity, that of the Incarnation of God, that of the virginity of Mary, and thousands of others.

“The mystery of the Trinity does not strike me as being one of so much importance, and it seems to me that if once one divides the person of God into three individualities, one can just as well divide it into three millions, for the unity of course is lost directly this division takes place. Neither do I see the necessity of believing in the devil because one believes in the existence of sin. Sin, as I have told you before, is only ignorance of good. Sin proceeds from ignorance, the

same as darkness proceeds from the want of light, but this state cannot last for ever. The sin does not proceed from our forefather Adam, but from our inexperience. And because I deny the existence of a devil I do not see in the least that I must make God the author of evil. Considering that evil is not an entity but a condition; evil, in fact, is undeveloped good.

“ You know very well, my dear instructress, that I do not believe in that absurd thesis of some philosophers, who maintain that the ceaseless production of plants and of all other living organisations is due to the fortuitous concourse of atoms, making thus, as you say very well, every living creature a part of God. And as I do not believe in the incarnation of the person of God in any earthly organisation, I neither believe in His incarnation in the person of Jesus Christ. I have also told you several times that I cannot believe that the sins of one are pardoned through the penance of another. You do not seem to approve of personal punishment, and yet how are sins to be forgiven if there is neither penance nor repentance on the part of the sinner? The doctrines of Christ may help men to overcome temptation, but his death, glorious as it was, cannot serve as atonement for other people's sins.

“ As I am not a Calvinist, I do not see the use of excusing Calvin's conduct, but I cannot refrain, for this, from accusing the inexcusable conduct of the Church of Rome.

“ I think I have now answered all the proofs that

you have put before me concerning the truth of your religion, yet, notwithstanding this, there is nothing I would like so much as to be able to believe in them, if it were only for your sake. But I cannot possibly believe in anything that goes against my reason and common sense."

"Oh Walter," exclaimed the poor girl, burying her face in my breast, "if you only knew how much superior is faith to reason, you would directly forget your doubts, and believe blindly in the dogmas of our Holy Mother Church."

CHAPTER X.

LOCH LOMOND.

ON Tuesday the 8th of July we were still in Dumbarton.

Monday had been a horrible day, it had rained incessantly, and a thick Scotch mist had veiled every mountain and hidden every valley. The Clyde, however, seen through the mist that rises from its waters, is infinitely more poetical than when the sun shines in all its glory over its smooth waters. This atmosphere that gives such a peculiar and mysterious look to the beautiful scenery of ancient Caledonia, and that says so much to the heart, is much more pleasing to the imagination than those sunburnt hills of the south which can only speak to the eye, and leave nothing for memory and fancy to dwell upon.

How many sweet things can the imagination picture to itself in presence of this mysterious and picturesque scenery, and at the feet of those elevated mountains, whose tops are lost beyond the clouds! and up whose sides these graceful wreaths of mist are for ever rising, discovering undreamed of beauties.

But if this climate is so poetical, at the same time it is certainly most disagreeable. It is utterly impos-

sible to go out when all the waters of the neighbouring ocean seem to come down in gentle dew over our heads. I have witnessed rain storms in the tropics, and dreadful they were, too, while they lasted, but I have nowhere seen anything like this. The whole of the air seems to be impregnated with rain, and nothing can stop its penetrating power. The Scotch people go out when it rains the same as when it is fine, they are so accustomed to their climate that they think nothing of it. But this is not the case with foreigners, and so, when they are surprised with a day such as this, they are obliged to remain in the hotel, which is most tantalizing.

But I should not speak thus. Could time seem long when one is by the side of the being one loves best in the whole world?

When Conchita came out of her room to breakfast, she looked out of the window to examine the weather for a few seconds, and then she took her place at the table without saying a word.

She looked so beautiful as she sat opposite to me, making the tea in the English style, that I could not but shudder when, in thought, I contrasted the bright and gay Andalusian skies with the mists and fogs of this gloomy-looking and cold Scotland. I accused myself of taking her away from her country, her family, and her friends, of carrying her away from her pleasant home and her sunny climate, to shut her up amidst the hills and lakes of this cold and damp north, that we so much love, but that must seem so

dull and melancholy to those accustomed to live under the burning rays of a southern sun.

I observed this to my young wife, but she soon dispersed my remorse.

“Walter,” she said, “is it possible you can doubt of my happiness when it depends so entirely upon yourself! Oh my husband!” she continued, whilst she encircled my head with arms that might have rivalled those of the Venus of Medicis, “I should neither be a wife nor a woman if I did not consider myself happier at your side than anywhere else. And, after all, what have I lost! My country, its bright sun, its pure and clear sky, the envy of all the earth, my convent, my family, perhaps so! but have I not gained a husband? ah! what is all the rest compared to that? what is all the world compared to our love?”

“Oh, my sweet wife!” I exclaimed, as I caught her in my arms, “those words have made me very happy. I so often fear that the time may come when you will weary of this new life, and pine away under these cold skies of the north, and when even my devoted love may seem to you too dearly bought, and but poor compensation for all you have left behind.”

She quickly covered my mouth with her small hand, as, with a look of entreaty, she murmured, “Oh, please, dear Walter, say no more! your love dearly bought indeed! what should I do without it? for it is the sunlight of my life, and could I not bask in its warm rays I should indeed pine away, even under the burning sun of Seville.”

“You are right,” I exclaimed, moved by those sweet words, “and it is not you who have lost Spain, but Spain who has lost you.”

“Now I am no longer Spanish, then,” and offering me a cup of tea she said, in English, “*Do you want sugar in your tea, my dearest?*”

“Lady Carlton,” I answered, also in English, “*tea made by your sweet hands does not want any sugar.*”

After the breakfast I gave Conchita her English lesson. The progress she makes in that language appears quite marvellous to me, when I think of the time that I took to learn Spanish!

The other day I left her for a few moments alone in the hotel, and when I came back I was told that *my lady* had gone out. This surprised me, for I knew too well how she disliked going out alone.

Ten minutes after I saw her come in with a beautiful cigar case of Russia leather in her hand.

“See,” she said, “I bought it all alone, and the man at the shop understood every word I said when I told him I wanted it for my husband.”

Before leaving Spain la Señora de Vargas wanted her daughter to take lessons in English with a celebrated master of that language well known in Seville, but I told her that I would take charge of her instruction myself; and so I have done since our marriage. It is so sweet to teach the one we love! Woman forms generally a perfect contrast to the indocility and opposition that one has almost always to contend with in a child. Call a boy to his lessons, and

he will come against his will, or, more likely, he will pretend not to understand, and will go on playing; she, on the contrary, is in advance of the hour, she loves to be our disciple, and engraves each of our words in her tender heart. She has faith, deference, and even respect for the knowledge of the one she loves. In a word, if she were not the beloved being, and the happiness of our hearts, she would at least, by her docility and her promptitude, be the best of scholars.

Add to this, that she is only too delighted to prolong this pastime that makes her feel so young. She seems so happy when she receives even this small boon at our hands! She is moreover sensible to the gentleness of her master, to his praises, and also to his scoldings. Contrary to the child, she is afraid of being scolded. If one is too severe to her, if one calls her "*Madame*," she begins to cry, and she throws herself into the arms of her master. This finishes the lesson.

I do not know if all women are like this, but such, at least, has been my experience with Conchita.

The pious and, perhaps, bigoted Spaniard, accustomed only to the routinal lessons of the convent and the Church, feared sometimes to hear what she considered my too liberal ideas, and my outspoken thoughts seemed always to hurt her quick but superstitious imagination. Moreover, her mind, although most intelligent and well cultivated, was naturally timorous, and rendered more so by the kind of education she had received.

Sometimes when we were discussing a spiritual or a religious point, she would exclaim, "Oh, how ignorant I am! I pretend to understand your ideas when I can hardly comprehend my own. When you want me to open my heart to you, when you ask me my opinion, I cannot express myself. . . . Then you complain and think me cold. . . . But this is not so. I have to sustain in my heart a continual warfare between my religious belief and your advanced ideas; this is too much for me. I cannot doubt of the faith of my parents, and yet I cannot contradict your statements, although they break my heart. Is it talent that I want? or is it my tongue that will not utter my feelings? . . . Oh, I cannot speak! . . . You who speak so well, Walter . . . convince me if you can of the truth of your doctrines. I want to be yours in everything; oh, yes! instruct me, and place a soul in my bosom that may be elevated enough to understand yours, and that may teach me to love you as you deserve."

At last, on Tuesday, the 8th, we left Dumbarton by the railway for Balloch.

The morning presented itself dull and cloudy, and the Clyde was still veiled in a white but vaporous mist. The sun rose amidst clouds and upon a dappled sky, smiling in long blue streaks through a hazy screen. Conchita proposed that we had better remain another day in Dumbarton, where we were so well lodged in the Elephant Hotel. "It would be most tantalizing to see Loch Lomond on a misty day," she

said. But as we had already lost so much time on the banks of the Clyde, we decided to continue our journey through the Highlands in spite of the weather, which, however, cleared up during the day. I sent a telegram to the proprietor of the Tarbet Hotel, telling him that we should require rooms for the night; for at this time of the year it is most difficult to find rooms in the hotels if one does not write for them beforehand. A quarter of an hour afterwards I received the answer, also by telegraph. How grand is this invention, that carries our messages from one end of the world to the other with the velocity of thought. It seems to me that this is the greatest proof of man's progress, and of his power over the earth. Men can never be grateful enough to Sir Benjamin Franklin for the great blessing he discovered for humanity. But in spite of the velocity of the electric spark, my message arrived too late, and we were obliged to content ourselves with two back rooms in the hotel on Loch Lomond, for all the others were already engaged.

An hour later we descended from the railway at Balloch, a rather ancient town on the banks of the Lake.

I asked one of the porters where the steamer was that was to take us to Tarbet, and he told me that the train conveyed the passengers to the shores of the Lake. We once more entered our carriage, and took our seats in it, but for a few minutes only, for we soon reached the pier where the steamer was waiting our arrival.

The first look that one casts upon this lake is always one of admiration. Before us we see an immense expanse of water, that seems to lose itself in the horizon between lofty mountains. At our feet the mirror-like waters glide before our eyes like clouds of gauze and gold; and over these fair blue waters rise innumerable islands, green and fresh as if they had just come out of the water—a true archipelago of little islands.

But who can feel, when reading a mere description, written with cold ink upon a blank expanse of paper, what passes through an impressionable heart when it contemplates the sublime spectacle that virgin nature offers to his view in those fair northern countries, where everything is harmony, melody, and poetry? Who can describe this Mediterranean of the mountains, populated with islands so varied in their form and so different in their character?—some grave and majestic, covered with dark woods, that harmonise so well with the waters that surround them, reflected so perfectly upon their mirror-like surface; others, even more sombre, consist only of rude rocks, on which vegetation has found as yet no home. Farther back, we discern others,

“Like Highland maidens, sweetly fair,
The snood and rosebud in her hair,
Yon emerald isles, how calm they sleep
On the blue bosom of the deep;
How bright they throw, with waking eye,
Their lone charms on the passers by.”

What a sublime garden this is, where the soul is

transported with delight, and the eloquent beauty of which speaks to the hearts of all men !

Conchita leant on my arm ; and thus, side by side, we went on board the steamer. Almost all our fellow-passengers were tourists like ourselves ; and all, without exception, seemed struck dumb by the beauty of the scene before them. Exalted by its majesty, one is compelled to exclaim, as did Murray when he saw it for the first time, “ Where is the man who would not fight for such a country ? This land was not made for slaves. Look at these bulwarks of nature ! Every mountain head which forms this chain of hills is an impregnable rampart against invasion.”

Loch Lomond is the largest of the sweet water lakes of Scotland, and, without doubt, the most picturesque and beautiful. Towards the south—that is to say, about the place where we were at that moment—it forms a kind of bay of more than five miles in width, studded, as I have said, with innumerable isles, varied in form and character, but all equally picturesque and lonely. Towards the north, the surface of the water is prolonged, forming a rather broad gulf of nearly twenty-four miles in length.

High mountains surround this lake, some of which rise to three thousand two hundred feet and more. To this topographic description one must add the varied effects of a wild and virgin vegetation ; the beautiful little panoramas that one can distinguish between the mountains, and the golden clouds that cover their tops, together with the rising mist that

blends together the outlines, so as to make the shore hardly distinguishable from the blue waters of the lake below.

Such was the scene that surrounded us on all sides, and at each stroke of the engine a new panorama more and more beautiful unfolded itself before our sight.

I had been in Scotland before, it is true, but I had never till then learned to appreciate the beauties of this wonderful country. Conchita, however, felt the power of its witchery even more than I did. We both gazed long, and with deep admiration, upon this matchless scene without uttering one word to express our emotions; viewing it in silence, as though to break that silence would have broken the spell which had been thrown over our minds by the first look we had cast upon this wondrous lake.

After a deep sigh, she exclaimed, "I should never have thought that the earth contained anything so beautiful, so celestial! oh! this cannot be the world, this is . . . paradise!"

Now and then melodious strains, as those which proceed from an Eolian harp, came to our ears. Save this, all was silent around us, for the whole creation seemed spell-bound with admiration before such a magnificent scene. The silence was such that the smallest noises were distinctly perceptible. One could hear the silence itself, the distant murmur of a brook while running through the valley, the whistling of the wind over the mountains, the vaporous cascade

as it fell into the lake, the dew drops that fell from leaf to leaf, the twitter of the birds whilst they built their nests among the umbrageous foliage, their sweet songs, and even the soft breeze of the evening, all, all seemed to be singing a hymn of thanks to the Creator ; and those varied sounds came to our ears, forming a sweet and melodious harmony that rose from earth towards the calm heaven above.

Is there a melody comparable to the echoes of the mountains as they continually sound over the blue lakes of Caledonia ?

The steamer moved peacefully over the surface of the smooth water, leaving a long track behind that became wider and wider till it reached the distant shores on either side.

Inch Murrin was the first island we passed. It is said to be the largest, and it certainly is one of the most beautiful. Instead of being a wild spot, as the greater part of the isles of Loch Lomond are, it is to-day a well-planted park belonging to the Duke of Montrose, in which the deer run to and fro with entire liberty. At its southern extremity we perceived the ruins of a castle, some old feudal residence of an ancient chieftain.

After this island, we passed another, and after this another, and another, till we found it impossible to count them. And every one of those beautiful little spots of earth that vanished before our eyes like dreams of beauty in a midsummer night's dream, or the romantic site of some old tradition, left its trace

in the picture-gallery of our memory—never to be forgotten.

In this, which can truly be called the land of poetry, every little spot, every wood, every isle, every mountain, has served as the scene of some wild or romantic legend. For this is the country of old traditions. In this island took place the great battle of Clairinch, so well fought by the Buchanans; in the other, called Inch Chailliach, we can still see among the trees the ruins of the convent where Mary of Leith lived after the tragical death of her lover.

On the shore, above a little rising ground, we can see still the celebrated Buchanan House, the seat of the Duke of Montrose, which has been the scene of so many romantic dramas. On the left bank rises the town of Luss, with its old castle, the last heiress of which married the Colquhoun of Colquhoun, after the most romantic adventures. Further on we can just perceive the plain where the battle was fought between the Macgregors and the Colquhouns in the time of James VI., Glen Flinn, if I remember rightly.

On the right bank above Inversnaid and its picturesque waterfall, we find Rob Roy's cave, a deep and extensive cavern, so celebrated in Scotch romance, but which from here is almost imperceptible to the naked eye.

“Yes, slender aid from fancy's glass
It needs, as round those shores we pass,
'Mid glen and thicket dark, to scan
The wild Macgregor's savage clan,

Emerging at their chieftain's call,
To foray or to festival ;
While nodding plumes and tartans bright
Gleam wildly o'er each glancing height."

Loch Lomond is the spot where we find more traditions and legends than elsewhere. There is not an isle, a vale, a mountain, whose name is not united to those of Ossian, of Oscar, of Wallace and Bruce, of Colquhoun, or of James V., and which does not remind the traveller of the wild adventures and heroic deeds of the heroes of old Caledonia ; and, above all, the daring Rob Roy, whom Sir Walter Scott has made so famous throughout Europe.

"Can you not relate to me some of those old legends," said my beautiful bride, while she cast upon me one of her most lovely smiles.

"Yes, I will," I said, "if you sketch for me, in the meantime, the wondrous scene before us."

"That I will with the greatest pleasure," she answered, and, bringing out her sketch book, she began drawing the outlines of the mountains, while I narrated the following story.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BRIDE OF LUSS.*

IN that pretty little village that you see between the trees, at the mouth of a picturesque stream on the left bank of Loch Lomond, lived, once upon a time, many, many years ago, a young squire or laird, as they are called in Scotland. The entire village, consisting of a few cottages, an old parish church, and a large and, at that time, modern manor house, belonged to the laird of Luss, as James Colquhoun was called by his tenants and neighbours.

Since the time of his father's death, a few years previous to the commencement of my tale, his property had increased prodigiously, and prosperity and plenty were enjoyed by all his tenants.

Each time that the inhabitants of the glen raised their eyes to the manor house, which is situated on the slope of the Paps, a small range of hills culminating in Cruach Dubh, they blessed their kind and good landlord.

Why so many blessings, and so much affection? We shall soon learn this, if we listen to the conversation of Fanny and Jessie, two young country lasses,

* See Appendix, Note 11.

as they proceeded on their way to the neighbouring brook, where they are going for water.

“Let us go quickly,” says the bonnie Fanny; “it will soon be twelve o’clock, for the sun is already nearly at the top of the kirk tower, and that husband of mine is furious if he does not find me at home when he comes from work.”

Jessie blushes, and, quickening her pace, says, “And my father is also waiting, I forgot.”

“My husband, when he is working for the laird, hardly takes time to eat, he is so anxious to return to his work.”

“That is just the case with father.”

“It is true, Jessie, darling, that Master Colquhoun is worthy of it all; for while he lives there will be no poor people in the village.”

“You are right, Fanny; see how much he has done for us; last year we had not enough corn to pay the rent, and he not only forgave us that, but he even gave us corn to sow for the next harvest.”

“He did the same for us, and for all the villagers.”

“When this good master dies more angels will accompany him to heaven than there are stars to light the way.”

“May the Lord grant him a long life; the day the laird dies heaven will dress in its best to receive him, while the earth will have to go into mourning.”

“The minister said last Sunday that, great and small, we all have some stain upon our conscience; but I think Master Colquhoun’s conscience must be

purser than the water of this burn, for his only desire is to make every body happy around him."

"How happy the lassie will be whom he marries."

"And, as he himself said the other day to father, when he marries it will not be a rich woman, but a bonnie Highland lassie."

"Well, Jessie, I think you are then the very one to suit him."

"What things you do say, Fanny!"

"Do not blush for that, lassie, for the king of Scotland would not be too good for our Highland darling."

"Why, the Master, so handsome, so good, and so rich! how could he ever think of me?"

"But he does, though, and not a little. The other day I was sitting at my door-step, sewing David's kilt, when he came, and was just talking to me, when you looked out of your window opposite, and he said, 'There is our bonnie Jessie Macgregor, the prettiest girl of the clan.'"

The village maiden became as red as a poppy, and her bright eyes sparkled like two stars, lighting up her beautiful face.

They soon arrived at the bottom of the hill, and Fanny began to fill her can with the fresh water of the brook that then, as to-day, fell in a cascade into the lake below.

While she was doing this, the village bells struck twelve with their merry clang in their well-known tone.

"'Tis twelve o'clock!" exclaimed Fanny. "Good

Lord ! and my husband at home waiting." And she began to run up the hill towards the village with her can, while her young friend was still filling hers.

When Jessie's can was in its turn full, she tried to place it upon her head, but she could not accomplish this.

For the third time she tried, but with the same ill success ; and, feeling her strength unequal to the task, she began to look towards the village to see if some one was coming who would help her, when all of a sudden she saw the Laird himself, who was coming from the mountain, whistling merrily as usual.

"You arrive in time, Laird," said the village beauty. "Would you be so good as to help me with this can, it is so heavy ? Will you kindly lend me a hand, Sir ?"

"There is nothing I would not do to please you, my bonnie Jessie."

"You are laughing at me, Sir,"

"No, I am not. Are you not the prettiest girl of Luss ?"

"To how many have you said that already, Master Colquhoun ?"

"Let us talk seriously, Jessie, my darling. I have often tried to see you alone, and, until to-day, I have always failed," said the Laird, changing his merry tone for a more serious and decided one.

Jessie cast her beautiful eyes on the running stream, and forgot all about the can of water, and her father, who was waiting for her in their little cottage.

“I,” continued the young man, “am rich, and, in spite of this, I am not happy; because, although I have all that money can buy, I feel I want something more!”

“Oh! what can you want, Sir — you, of all men?”

“A heart that loves me.”

“There is not one in the village that does not love their Laird.”

“Well, that is gratifying, but it does not fill the void in my heart.”

“I do not understand you, Sir.”

“Jessie, my lass, that smile and that blush prove to me that you do understand me; but, in spite of this, I want to express to you what I really *do* feel. At night, when I am alone in my old library, when day closes, when silence begins to reign over the glen, and the sun disappears behind the distant hills of Loch Long; when the bells of the kirk call the faithful to the evening prayer, and when I see the stalwart Highlander leave his fields, his scythe, and his plough, to return to his home, where, full of love, his wife and his children are waiting for him; I feel in my heart a sadness which I cannot explain to myself.

“When I walk through the fields, so full of beauty; when I ride through the dark forests that lead to the head of the Loch; when I row upon the blue waters yonder; when the birdies sing; when the sky is blue; when everything becomes bright and beautiful at the breath of the Creator, who fills our fields with

blossoms and our groves with song,—I feel the same sadness, the same anxiety, the same discontent, that I cannot express, and which I can only compare with that felt by the bird who is seeking a companion who will make a nest for him. Jessie, darling, I need a heart that will sympathise with mine own. Do you understand me now, my bonnie Jessie?

“I have often watched you, Jessie; and I think that I have seen in you this same anxiety, sadness, and want of sympathy, or whatever it may be.”

Jessie's eyes brightened. “I cannot express myself as you do, Master Colquhoun,” she said; “but I also feel what you describe.”

“And what is it, do you know?”

“Oh! I do not know, Sir. How can a poor country girl like me explain what passes in her heart?——but when one is young——”

“One must love!”

Jessie became even redder than she was before, and fixed her eyes more and more intently upon the brook that ran at her feet.

“You alone, Jessie, darling,” said the young man, after a pause, “can fill the empty space that there is in my heart.”

“Oh! no, never, Sir!——I am so poor!”

“But *I* am rich. Will you give me your love for my love and my riches?”

“I will,” said the simple country girl, “if my father makes no objection——”

But she said no more, for the young squire took

her in his arms, and, pressing her to his heart, hushed the sound of her words to his ear, which, however, reached his heart, where they remained engraved for ever. But not a word more was said on either side for a long time.

A village girl who was coming to the burn for water put an end to this tender scene. The Laird helped Jessie to put her can upon her head, and she began to ascend the hill towards Luss.

But while helping her to replace her heavy burden, he had managed to say to the pretty Jessie, without the girl who came for water, hearing him, "To-morrow I will speak to your father——for I *love you*, Jessie!"

Was Jessie pleased with the conversation she had had with the young Laird by the brook?

The only thing that tradition has been able to retain is, that when she arrived home, she passed the rest of that day in singing, and that the old cottagers agreed that they had never seen her look so lovely and so happy before.

The next day the Laird sought out her father, who was cutting wood in the forest.

"Good day, Macgregor," he said.

"Ah! 'tis you, Master."

"Yes; I am going to that old castle beyond the forest, that I am thinking about buying."

"Do you intend moving to it, Sir?"

"No; I was thinking of turning it into a hospital for the poor people of the parish."

"Oh! how good you are, Squire. Now, who else

would have thought of such a thing? You must be the happiest man on earth, Master Colquhoun."

"You have my happiness in your hands, good Macgregor."

"In my hands! How so?"

"By giving me your daughter for my wife."

The end of the conversation thus begun was, that the old man and the young Laird fell into each other's arms.

Colquhoun tried to convince him that neither he nor his daughter ought to be in the least indebted to him, telling him that Jessie was worth more than all his estates put together. But all was in vain.

That night there was not a person in Luss who did not know that their Laird was going to be married to the bonnie Jessie Macgregor.

A whole year had passed since Colquhoun had asked of old Macgregor the hand of his daughter, and Jessie was still unmarried.

And yet the young Laird was fonder than ever of the lovely country girl.

Shortly after the scene I have been narrating, old Macgregor died; and Jessie, who was left alone and penniless in the world, did not want to marry the laird until the time of mourning had expired.

Colquhoun had also been very busy in two works of the greatest importance—the founding of a hospital, and the restoration of the parish kirk of Luss.

He wanted to add to the satisfaction that he would

experience the day of his marriage, that of having finished those two works; and he also particularly desired that the old village church, that was undergoing repairs at his expense, should be opened with the celebration of his marriage with Jessie Macgregor.

But in spite of these two great and holy reasons for delay, the villagers began to talk about the long forth-coming wedding of their laird.

Let us see what was the subject of the conversation amongst the people.

"But, lassie dear," said Fanny to Jessie one day, as they went together to the brook for water, "now that we are alone let us talk about your wedding, that we have been so long expecting to come off: Do you know that I should never have believed that the Laird would have acted as he is doing?"

"I do not understand you," said the poor girl, turning very pale.

"Why, Jessie, do you think it is right that, after having asked your hand more than a year ago, he has not yet married you?"

"If we are not married yet, it is because there are two good reasons for the delay."

"I do not say anything to the contrary, Jessie, my bonnie lass, and I should be the last person in the world to think badly of the Laird, but people will talk, and there are plenty who say that he never intends marrying you at all."

"But that is nonsense; he loves me more than ever,

and you will see how soon all those idle gossips will be convinced to the contrary."

"I think as you do, Jessie, darling, but you must allow that they who talk are not quite wrong in what they say, for when a rich and powerful laird makes love to a poor peasant girl, there is always plenty of evil to be said about it, even if the laird be a saint."

"Never mind what they say of us, Fanny; I cannot think badly of my poor James, for I know he loves me above all things."

"I also know it, Jessie, darling, and I am convinced of his goodness; but, in spite of that, I am not very well pleased with his conduct. We are all mortal, and imagine, my dear girl, if to-morrow the laird were to die, which I pray God will not happen, how would you be situated . . . now that your father is dead, and with nothing to depend on in the world? You will remain with a stain upon your name that nobody could remove."

"In that you are right, Fanny," said the poor young girl, while tears came to her eyes.

Days passed, and even weeks, and Jessie was gradually getting ill, for she could not forget what Fanny had told her the day they went together to the burn by the side of the wood.

One evening Colquhoun, who was going on the lake fishing, called upon his intended bride, and told her that in eight days the church would be finished, and that they could be married.

That night Jessie could not sleep for joy.

It was about eight o'clock the next morning, and Jessie began to wonder why her lover was so long in coming, for Colquhoun came every day at seven to the village, to superintend the repairs of the old kirk.

She was looking from her cottage window towards the manor house that was so soon to be her own, when she saw a servant of the laird, who was running as fast as he could to the village.

Jessie rushed to meet him, to ask him what was the matter, and she learnt with dismay that he was coming to call the priest and the doctor, for that morning they had found the poor laird insensible in the lake, and that he was now dying.

Jessie ran as fast as she could to the manor house, but she arrived too late.

Soon after, the Glen of Luss was a valley of tears, for its Laird *was dead* !

The sun had sunk below the horizon of the earth, but in heaven it still shone brightly. In the centre, in a realm of light and glory, was seen the unsleeping eye of God, which is as much as the most holy can see of the Almighty Creator. The multitude of angels without number were singing the glories of Diety, and Heaven rung with their perpetual hosannas.

To this region of supreme glory was introduced the now free spirit of James Colquhoun. He had no need to plead for himself, for the Lord knoweth what passes in every soul, and out of the throne of

light, where dwelleth the Invisible One, came a voice sweeter than the melodies of the angels, and more distinct than even the voice of his own conscience, which said,—

“Thou hast been a righteous man, thy prayers have been heard, and thou hast done good deeds upon earth, but into this region of eternal bliss none can enter but those who have no stain upon their souls, and thou hast left on earth below, a poor young maiden, friendless and alone, therefore thou mayest not come into the heaven of the pure, but he who chastises but from love will grant you a place in that region which men call purgatory, and which is but the porch of heaven. Go ! thy doom is cast.”

The angels went on singing the praises of God, and the trumpets sounded, and tempests were heard below on the earth, roaring.

The spirit of Colquhoun felt itself compelled by an invisible power to abandon the celestial sphere, and a moment after found itself stretched upon a rock overlooking a wild and horrible, but indescribable spot, not of earth, but rather of the realms of imagination.

Time has no influence over the immortal spirits, and he could not tell how long he had been there, though it seemed to him as if ages of everlasting torment had passed over his head when a vision of purity and of beauty appeared before his sight.

It was the blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, who was coming down to purgatory to console

the wretched spirits that were there, suffering the punishments of their earthly sins.

Our blessed Lady beheld the spirit of the brave Highlander chained to a rock, and the demons lying idly by, for his remorse and his anxiety about his earthly love was more bitter to him than all their torments.

The Virgin approached the spirit, and said in a sweet voice, which stilled his cry, for in what state are we indifferent to the pleasure derived from consolation? "Wherefore, oh son of earth, art thou so tormented by thy conscience, that thy sorrow is more intolerable to thee than all the punishments of this place of retribution?"

"Because, Holy Mother," answered the poor laird, I have left in my native Highland glen a virgin, pure and lovely, alone, and without protection, who once loved me truly, and who now must mourn incessantly my death, for I know with what agony I should have mourned *her* had she died instead."

The Holy Mary, who still felt in her breast the pure flame of the once earthly, though now divine love which she had felt when in the world for her son, took compassion upon him:

"Thou hast been good and merciful when on earth, James Colquhoun," she said, taking him by the hand, "thy only fault has been punished enough already by the moral suffering thou hast undergone, for the sins of love carry their punishment with them. Thou

mayest return with me to heaven, there to receive the reward due for thy good deeds."

And the blessed Virgin raised herself upon her aureal of glory, and gently ascended towards the bright point in the distance which marked the entrance of heaven, while the penitents below raised their voices, breathing blessings and prayers, which accompanied her to her celestial sphere.

The laird felt his chains drop from him, and he, too, ascended, without the least effort, to the celestial region.

Once more he was in paradise, once more he saw the ever-watching eye of God, surrounded by the crowds of angels. But not even this glorious scene was enough to make him forget his earthly love; while his beloved was unhappy, how could he be happy? And his constant cry was, "Jessie, Jessie, my darling, could I but see you again!"

The divine and loving nature of the Virgin was touched. "Can thy love be so great that not even paradise can efface it from thy mind? I also love, oh my son, and my glory is the part I take in the love of others, how can I minister to thy sorrow?"

The face of the spirit brightened up with joy. "Grant me one favour, oh suffer me, Holy Mother," he said, "to return to earth, and to bring hither with me the soul of my beloved Jessie."

Then the voice of the Almighty was heard to say: "Thou camest to my presence with a stain, that, though small, prevented my granting thee a place in

my kingdom, but thy love has saved thee, and thy prayer is granted. Return to the world and purify thyself there, with thy many virtues. Thy boon is to make the one thou hast left on earth, happy, live with her till the day of her death, and then thou mayest return with her to my presence, to dwell amongst the blessed for evermore."

Colquhoun suddenly felt himself plunged into the most profound darkness, and he thought he travelled through seemingly endless unknown regions. At last his wild flight ceased.

A tear fell upon his cold cheek, and he felt a hot lip upon his. Life came back all at once to his body, and he opened his eyes. Two cries of joy were raised at that moment to the throne of God in heaven above.

He was in his own room in the manor-house of Luss, and Jessie Macgregor was by his side.

The inconsolable maiden had gone into the chamber where they had told her the body of her lover lay, and when she had pressed her tender lips to those of the corpse, the dead man had come back to life again.

Colquhoun always believed that Jessie's love had restored him to life, but the world, and particularly the doctors, said that he had only been in a swoon, but that he had survived an accident that might very well have cost him his life.

Eight days after, the laird of Luss was married in

the church rebuilt by him, to the beautiful Jessie Macgregor. After the wedding, he told the priest who had united them, the wonderful story that I have been narrating.

“Son,” said the priest, “all that you have told me has been a dream, the wanderings of a violent fever, for God is too high for there to be a comparison between the things of heaven and those of earth ; but bless and thank Him who has sent you that dream, for with it he has given you a lesson which you must never forget. Who knows, if it had not been for it, perhaps you would never have married *her* who to-day is your wife, and if your dream might not have become a horrible reality !”

CHAPTER XII.

TARBET.

“ I LIKE that story,” said Conchita, when I had finished my legend ; “ it proves to us the power of love and its constancy, and that dream, although rather fantastic, suits my imagination, and is quite in accordance with my faith.”

“ Why ? for the very reason that it is so utterly fantastic and wonderful ? ”

“ Nay, Walter, do not laugh at my faith ; to the comprehension of the philosophers it is inexplicable how the voice of Jesus could have raised Lazarus out of his grave ; for the world at large it may also be inexplicable how the kiss of a virgin could give life to a corpse. I thank God he has placed me in the region of belief, above both the philosophers and the world.”

“ You may believe whatever you like of my story ; I have only repeated it as it was once told to me, for its truth, of course, I cannot vouch, but I tell you plainly, my darling, that it seems to me both absurd and impossible ; for the ways of God cannot be the ways of man ; but I accept it, because it proves to me that love can never die.

“ With life all other passions fly,
 All others are but vanity.
 In heaven ambition cannot dwell,
 Nor avarice in the vaults of hell ;
 Earthly, these passions are of earth,
 They perish where they have their birth :
 But love is indestructible.
 Its holy flame for ever burneth,
 From heaven it came, to heaven returneth.
 Too oft on earth a troubled guest,
 At times deceived, at times opprest,
 It here is tried and purified,
 Then hath in heaven its perfect rest :
 It soweth here with toil and care,
 But the harvest time of love is there.” *

Soon afterwards we went down into the saloon to dinner, after which we hurried up again on deck, where a troop of Highlanders were singing the famous chorus of Sir Walter Scott’s splendid lyric, “The Gathering of Clan-Gregor.”

“ The moon’s on the lake, and the mist’s on the brae,
 And the clan has a name that is nameless by day ;
 Then gather, gather, gather, Gregalich !
 Our signal for fight, that from monarchs we drew,
 Must be heard but by night in our vengeful haloo.
 Then haloo, Gregalich ! haloo, Gregalich !

“ Glen Orchy’s proud mountains, Coalchuirn and her towers,
 Glenstrae and Glenlyon no longer are ours ;
 We’re landless, landless, landless, Gregalich !
 But, doom’d and devoted by vassal and lord,
 Macgregor has still both his heart and his sword !
 Then courage, courage, courage, Gregalich !

“ If they rob us of name and pursue us with beagles,
 Give their roofs to the flames and their flesh to the eagles !
 Then vengeance, vengeance, vengeance, Gregalich !

* Robert Southey—“ The Curse of Kehama.”

While there's leaves in the forest, or foam on the river,
Macgregor, despite them, shall flourish for ever!

Come then, Gregalich! come then, Gregalich!

"Through the depths of Loch Katrine the steed shall career,
O'er the peak of Ben Lomond the galley shall steer;
And the rocks of Craig-Royston like icicles melt,
Ere our wrongs be forgot or our vengeance unfelt!
Then gather, gather, gather, Gregalich!"

This spirited song was followed by another, no less characteristic of the wild region in which we were at that moment.

"Hail to the chief, who in triumph advances!
Honour'd and bless'd be the ever-green pine!
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!

Heaven send it happy dew,
Earth send it sap anew,
Gaily to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
While every Highland glen
Sends our shout back agen,
Roderigh Vich Alpine Dhu, ho! ieroe!"

"Ours is no sapling, chance sown by the fountain,
Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
When the whirlwind has stripp'd every leaf on the mountain,
The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.

Moor'd in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest's shock,
Firmer the roots as ruder it blows;
Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
Echo his praise agen,
Roderigh Vich Alpine Dhu, ho! ieroe!

"Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen-Fruin,
And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied:
Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
And the best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side.

Widow and Saxon maid,
Long shall lament our raid,

Think of Clan Alpine with fear and with foe ;
 Lennox and Leven-Glen
 Shake when they hear agen,
 Roderigh Vich Alpine Dhu, ho ! ieroe !

“ Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands,
 Stretch to your oars, for the ever-green pine !
 O ! that the rose-bud that graces yon islands
 Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine !
 O that some seedling gem,
 Worthy such noble stem,
 Honour'd and blest in their shadow might grow ;
 Loud should Clan Alpine then
 Ring from the deepmost glen,
 Roderigh Vich Alpine Dhu, ho ! ieroe ! ”

“ What a glorious country this is,” exclaimed Conchita, when the song had finished, “ where the men are so brave and the scenery is so grand ! I should never have believed that in such a northern country, far away from the chivalry of Europe, so much patriotism and so much character would be found.”

The Highlanders then sang, at the unanimous request of the passengers, the well-known air of “ Bonnie Dundee.” When they came to the last verse,

“ Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
 Come saddle my horses, and call up my men ;
 Come open your gates, and let me gae free,
 I daurna stay langer in Bonnie Dundee,”

the whole company joined in chorus. There is something so true-hearted and so noble in those national lays, when one hears them amidst the picturesque scenery of their native home, it is impossible to control one's feelings, and the spirit of the least impressionable is carried away by them.

When the song had finished we stopped at the pier of Tarbet, our destination. We were all sorry to quit the steamer, but the sun that, at that moment, was disappearing behind the distant hills of Loch Long told us that it was time to land.

The Tarbet hotel is most beautifully situated in a little bay on the left bank of Loch Lomond, and from it one enjoys one of the most complete and striking views of the lake. In front of the hotel, on the other side of the water, rises Ben Lomond, the highest of the mountains of this lake, which—

“Through shrouding mists looks dimly down;
For though, perchance, his piercing eye
Doth read the secrets of the sky,
His haughty bosom scorns to show
Those secrets to the world below.
Close-woven shades, with varying grace,
And crag and cavern mark his base.” *

* Sigourney.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MOONLIGHT WALK.

NIGHT was beginning to cover the landscape with her black and starry veil, and if the lake had seemed beautiful to us during the day, how much more so, did it now appear illuminated by countless millions of suns that shone upon it from distant spheres !

Night is the time for lovers ; its silent and solitary hours are by far the most enchanting, the sweetest and the happiest of our whole lives ; for in them our passionate hearts enjoy a more intimate communion with the being we most dearly love.

A fresh and pure breeze came to us over the peaceful waters of the lake, refreshing us after the heat of the day, with its perfumed air. Conchita looked at me for a moment, and then she said, in those sweet melodious tones which belonged to her only, " What a beautiful night, Walter. Would you not like to take a walk by the banks of Loch Lomond, and enjoy the silent charms of this hour in the open air ? "

I was, of course, delighted with her proposition, and in a short time we went out of the hotel arm in arm.

It would be impossible for me to describe the glorious spectacle that Loch Lomond offers during those peaceful hours of summer, when the full moon lights up with silvery rays each isle and each wave of this, the most enchanting of all lakes. Oh ! it would indeed be impossible for a contemplative soul not to admire so much beauty and so much poetry. The vault of heaven appears studded with millions of stars, that shine as so many islands of light upon an ocean suspended over our heads. Who can look upon them and then turn his eyes upon the earth without experiencing a melancholy sentiment, and without wishing for wings to direct one's flight towards them, and to mingle one's self with their eternal splendour ?

In front of us rose, as a giant, the colossal Ben Lomond surrounded by a thousand other mountains that, like courtiers, kneel before their king. The mist had now completely dispersed, and our curious looks could discover the farthest hills, that rise one above the other as a council of giants who are going to judge the world ; at our feet ran the waters of the lake, pure and crystal-like, reflecting each leaf, each crag, each mountain. A little farther we saw a green isle that brought back to our minds the fabulous island of Calypso. But this was an isle that Homer himself would have been at a loss to describe. For there is more poetry in nature than fable can imagine in its wildest dreams of fancy.

The silver moon of July illuminated this fairy-like

scene, adding the enchantment of mystery to its many charms, for the light of the moon is infinitely sweeter than that which proceeds from the bright star of day. Orb of meditation and of mystery, it has ever been destined to inspire thoughts of a purer and far more poetic nature than the gorgeous sun, who with his ardent rays, burns the earth which he illumines.

“Hail to thy cold and clouded beam,
Pale pilgrim of the troubled sky !
Hail, though the mists that o’er thee stream
Lend to thy brow their sullen dye !
How should thy pure and peaceful eye
Untroubled view our scenes below,
Or how a tearless beam supply,
To light a world of war and woe !

“Fair Queen ! I will not blame thee now,
As once by Greta’s fairy side ;
Each little cloud that dimmed thy brow
Did then an angel’s beauty hide.
And of the shades I then could chide,
Still are the thoughts to memory dear,
For, while a softer strain I tried,
They hid my blush, and calmed my fear.

“Then did I swear thy ray serene
Was formed to light some lonely dell,
By two fond lovers only seen,
Reflected from the crystal well,
Or sleeping on their mossy cell,
Or quivering on the lattice bright,
Or glancing on their couch, to tell
How swiftly wanes the summer night.”

“Yes,” said Conchita, when I had murmured those verses out of *Rokeby*. “Yes, the moon must have been formed to light some lonely shore ‘ by two fond

lovers only seen.' How much poetry and sentiment there is in her pale, cloudless beam, as the poets call it; and yet, did not another poet tell us that

'The devil's in the moon for mischief;
 There's not a day,
The longest, not the twenty-fourth of June,
Sees half the business in a wicked way
On which three single hours of moonlight smile,
And then she looks so modest all the while.' *

"Ah, the moon is very poetic, very sweet, but at the same time is so changeable, so inconstant! Does not this put you in mind, Walter, of our *honeymoon* that will so soon set upon our horizon?"

"*So soon! so soon!* Why, my Conchita, that moon which you have called of honey, will lighten our hearts for a whole eternity, and will continue to inspire us with constant love. Do you believe that our love could be so easily forgotten? It is true that the moon will leave us at the end of the month, but she will appear anew at the beginning of the next, and then, if she be no longer called the moon of honey, she will be the same moon that has presided over our happiness."

"How sublime, Oh night, is thy language!" exclaimed Conchita, seating herself upon some rocks washed by the silvery waters, and seemingly paying no attention to what I had said, "is it possible that there can be those who pass indifferent and careless under such marvels, and who do not even raise their eyes to admire them?"

* Lord Byron.

“If night were deprived of stars,” I answered, “and earth had but one spot from which its numerous constellations and moons could be seen, the pilgrims to that wondrous sanctuary would know no bounds, and each palmer would come back praising its marvels and its wonders. But what we have constantly with us, loses its value in our eyes; custom calms the most excited imagination, and we easily forget the beauties of nature, in order to follow things which are scarcely worth our notice. That which is of real importance has but little charm for us. Earth has the power of luring us in such a way that we easily forget even heaven for it, for we are indeed of earth earthly, as the great apostle said.”

“You are right, Walter, how often are we not carried away by what is but superficial, forgetting that which is of the utmost importance to our welfare? We put aside what should be most interesting to us, to abandon ourselves to that which in our innermost hearts we despise! We praise the day, and we reckon the course of our lives by that of the sun, but how much more does our existence depend on the night; and how much more magnificent is it to our eyes? The day has but one sun; night has millions, whose brightness guides our progress through space, and carries our spirit straight into the bosom of the Almighty.”

“I am glad, Conchita, you think thus. Astronomy, of all sciences, is the one that teaches us our relative worth, showing us the relations that unite the earth

with the rest of creation. Without this science, as the past history of the ages shows us plainly, we find it impossible to know what we are, and where we are. Without it, we cannot establish an instructive comparison between the space we occupy in the heavens and the total of the universe. Without it, we ignore the true dimensions of our home, its nature, and even the order to which it belongs. Surrounded by the obscurity of ignorance, we cannot form the smallest idea of the general disposition of the universe. Darkness covers the limited horizon of our intelligence, and the human thought, incapable of elevating itself above the spectacle of every-day life, cannot, without science, overstep the small circumference drawn by the limits of the action of our senses. But when the torch of science lights up our path, the scene changes : the darkness that hid away from us the beauties of the horizon disappears, and the intelligent eye contemplates in all the majesty of a pure and cloudless sky, the immense work of the Creator. The earth appears as a globe turning upon its axis under the feet of man. Thousands of worlds like it move in space. The universe grows larger as the intensity of our look becomes more earnest, and the universal creation is then only appreciated in all its grandeur of design and beauty of detail. Science alone establishes the truth, and places before our very eyes the exact relation between the planet we inhabit, and the multitude of similar worlds which together compose the universe."

“Do you then believe that there is more than one world in the universe?”

“Of course, my darling Conchita, and all the modern astronomers have arrived at this conclusion. And it could not be otherwise. Life is universal, and the spiritual spark which constitutes our souls is to be found everywhere, just as much in the earth we tread, as in the air we breathe. If we analyse the smallest clod of earth, or the most microscopic grain of dust, we invariably find in them a small universe of life, a little world where everything lives, everything propagates itself; all the earth is populated with little organic beings which are not less real, because on account of their small size, they escape our sight.

“Even the air we breathe is full of little imperceptible animalculæ, as Professor Tyndall has recently demonstrated, and each of these insects, sporules, infusoria, siliceous or polygastric, as they have been called, according to their different natures, by the naturalists, is in itself a little system of vital evolutions, on whose minute bodies prey even smaller beings who live and die there, where the investigating eye of man will never reach to analyse them! For such is the profusion of life on this world, that all it contains is full of it!”

“Surely you must exaggerate,” said my young wife, surprised by these statements, which she heard for the first time.

“Far from it. All that I have been telling you is

perfect truth, and in order to prove it to you still more, I will give you undeniable and positive facts.

“Leuwenhœch, the immortal discoverer of the microscope, has assured us that a thousand millions of infusoria do not occupy more room than a grain of corn, and 1,111,500,000 of them are required to weigh a gramme.

“Camille Flammarion in his book *La pluralite des mondes habités* (L. iii. c. 11), says that in a square inch of chalk one can count more than 40,000,000 of fossil animalculæ, and 1,800,000,000 of fossil shells, and adds that one of these creatures could produce in four days 150,000,000 of its species.

“Sir John Herschel when he observed the little insects in the air, found that they could be counted by millions.

“Ehrenberg has discovered, also, that life is distributed with such profusion upon this earth, that even upon the infusoria of which I have been speaking to you, live, as parasites, other animalculæ of even smaller size.

“Sir John Herschel placed a drop of pure water upon a crystal, and viewing this through a microscope that gave this drop the apparent diameter of twelve feet, he was surprised to find that it contained a population of animals of all sizes, but such a compact population that in all this diameter of twelve feet it would have been impossible to place the point of a needle upon an unoccupied spot.

“Nothing is more marvellous than the organisation

of these invisible beings, and if the most attentive observations had not placed the facts beyond doubt, men might have been tempted to think, as you did, darling Conchita, that the accounts given by naturalists were pure fiction, or else audacious falsehoods.

“A single microzoon has, so to speak, no weight; placed in the most sensitive balance it does not impart to it the slightest oscillation. The whale, on the other hand, attains a length of one hundred feet, and a weight of two hundred tons—more than the weight of an army of three thousand men; and yet, the profusion of vital apparatus in the microsea sometimes exceeds that which is seen in these large creatures. There are some which possess fifteen to twenty stomachs, or even more, while man has only one, and the bull and the camel can boast of four or five. In addition, there is in some infusoria a curious mechanism appended to this superabundance of organs—one of the stomachs being furnished with teeth of extreme delicacy, which can be seen through the transparent body moving and crushing the food.

“Notwithstanding the extreme minuteness of these creatures, which remained unknown through so many ages, nature has expended the most watchful care upon them, and their different species fill all the earth, for they have been found among the ice of the Polar Seas at the seventy-eighth degree of south latitude, as in the regions of the equator.

“Near the poles, says Ehrenberg, there, where the large organisations could not subsist, is to be found,

however, a kind of life ; extremely small, it is true, but which possesses a most wonderful organisation, almost invisible, but incessant. The microscopic animals found in the austral seas near the South Pole during the voyages of Sir James Ross, offer a most peculiar kind of organisation unknown till then, and which often present a most remarkable elegance. In the remote ice-bergs which float about the $79^{\circ} 10'$ of longitude there have been found species of siliceous polygastric still alive, which proves to us that these microscopic animals have been able to subsist in the coldest of climates. In the Gulf of Erebus, the plummet brought up, from a depth of between 403 to 526 yards, seventy-eight species of silicious microzoa ; and they have been discovered at a depth of more than 12,000 feet, where they had to support the enormous pressure of 373 atmospheres—a pressure capable of bursting a cannon, but which the gelatinous body of a microscopic infusorium resists in some marvellous way.

“ But it is not only in the animal kingdom that we find such a profusion of life, and such extraordinary means of propagation. The vegetable kingdom is still richer and larger, and it also has its extremes like the animal one.

“ The vegetable kingdom is the emblem of diversity and harmony. While its extremes offer to us the most extraordinary contrasts, all its species are, however, so united by means of imperceptible links that they could almost be called one family. In some

species the size and the grandeur are pre-eminent ; thus you have the oak, the cedar, and the palm tree, which cover the earth with their foliage ; others attract our admiration by their beauty and the delicacy of their form and flowers, such as the ferns and the grasses. On one side we see robust forms modelled by the hands of giants, on the other the most delicate outlines traced by the fingers of fairies.

“ What an immense contrast does there not exist between the ever-green palm-tree, that seems to pierce the clouds with its straight and never-bending column, and that grey lichen, a thin layer of moss, that creeps up our statues and walls ! And yet even in the midst of this wondrous chaos, science reveals to us the order and the eternal wisdom which rules and directs everything.

“ The vegetable kingdom covers with its innumerable families all the surface of the earth, and we find it the same in the regions of the far north as in the forests of the equator, the same on the high mountains as in the profound depths of the ocean. It propagates itself with a marvellous rapidity, and some of its species live during centuries and centuries, always fresh, and always green.*

* “ There is a cypress tree, venerable patriarch of the vegetable kingdom, that has become celebrated on account of its size and of its antiquity. It grows in the road between Vera Cruz and Mexico, and, as Solis says in his “ Conquest of Mexico,” it served as refuge to Hernan Cortes and all his army. Its base measures one hundred and seventeen feet in circumference, and De Candolle assures us that it must be at least 6000 years old, age which im-

“ To prove to you, dear Conchita, the rapidity with which some plants are reproduced, I will give you the following statement, which is beyond doubt :— ‘ A single spotted orchid will have as many seeds in a year as would plant a field, the seeds of these orchids would cover the whole island of Anglesea, and the seeds of the orchids of the island of Anglesea would the following year cover forty-seven fiftieth parts of the whole earth.’* Such is the rapidity with which the vegetable kingdom is propagated upon our planet ! And this is not an exception ; almost all plants produce an immense number of seeds of which, if by far the greater part were not annually lost, we should soon see the whole earth covered.

“ Rey counted 32,000 seeds in a poppy, and Linæus tells us that sometimes one single tobacco plant produces 40,000 seeds at a time. Moreover, Dodard assures us that an elm produces 529,000 in a year !

“ Life is distributed throughout all the earth ; everything in it lives, and reproduces its existence for generations and generations ; each little insect that circulates through our blood, and each microscopic moss that grows over our houses, has its breath of life similar to that which gives us our being, and that like this, proceeds from the supreme Creator. Can it be possible that life which attains such a degree of development upon our globe, is only to be

plies it must have been a contemporary of Adam and Eve, if we believe in the Mosaic account.”—(*Hist. Gen. des Voy.* T. XII., p. 389.

* Fertilization of the British Orchids, p. 344.

found on this earth; and that all those bright stars that illuminate our nights could be deserted and uninhabited? Oh no! Great God! this could not be the case. Let me not limit the many benefits thou hast distributed upon our earth, to the small circle of one planet. Oh, omnipotent Creator! expand our intellectual vision to behold the many mansions we are told exist in thy kingdom, when we raise our eyes and see the myriads of worlds that, glittering, proclaim thy mighty power throughout thy glorious universe!

Conchita had listened to my long speech in utter astonishment. She could not understand so many marvels, and when I had finished she only had breath to murmur, "Oh my God, how great Thou art! And is it possible that I, a poor, miserable sinner, may call myself Thy daughter!"

I took her by the hand, and, showing her a bright star which glittered above our heads, I said, "Do you see that beautiful star, my darling, up yonder in the dark blue sky? It is *Sirius*, the most beautiful and the most brilliant of the stars of heaven. Fifty-two trillions, one hundred and seventy-four thousand millions of leagues divide us from it! and yet this enormous distance seems but a step when we compare it with the immensity of space!

"In order to traverse the space that divides that world from ours, light, which travels with the velocity of seventy thousand leagues a second, takes more than twenty-two years to arrive here. Thus the *Sirius* that you see to-day is not the *Sirius* of 1872, but the

Sirius of 1850, that is to say, that the luminous ray which at this moment we perceive is one which was shed by that star more than twenty-two years ago.

“The surface of the earth, that seems to us so large, and that some even pretend contains all the universe, is only 510,000,000 of square kilometers, while that of the sun is 1,407,187 times larger, and that little star which you see yonder is twelve times larger even than the sun, for its diameter is of no less than 4,500,000 of leagues!

“Oh Conchita! there is nothing that raises the soul so much towards its Creator as the study of the heavens. It is to it that we owe the wonderful and accurate science of astronomy, and it is to it that we also owe our present enlarged ideas of the immensity of the universe, and the omnipotence of God!

“How grand it is for man, a mere spiritual atom in a material atomic frame, to have penetrated the mysteries of the universe, and to have raised himself to the knowledge of these sublime truths! For could it be possible that those immense worlds, so beautiful, so perfect, have only been made for desolation and solitude? Could it be possible that the God who has so filled this world with life, and who has distributed organised existence with such profusion upon it, has also made worlds like Sirius, so much larger, so much more perfect, so much more inhabitable than ours, only to give light to the men of this little earth? This could not be; it would be against the economy which God has displayed in all His other works. Of

what use can the light, which comes from those distant suns, be to the inhabitants of this world, if the distance which divides them from it, and which, in most cases, takes thousands of years to traverse, makes that light appear so small that men cannot even read by it? Moreover, there are so many thousands of colossal suns, of which men will never have an idea! Of what use can the light, which proceeds from those suns, be to us if we can only perceive it by means of the strongest and most powerful telescopes, and even then only under certain circumstances?"

"Our church, however, tells us, Walter, that they were only created to give light upon earth; perhaps this is not verosimil, but it is actually the truth. And it seems to me that this proves to us more than anything else the grandeur and the power of the Almighty, who made such colossal suns, and who distributed them with such a profusion all over the heavens, only to give light and pleasure to man, His chief work."

"If you speak to me according to science, or according to reason or common sense, I shall be able to answer all your objections; but if, to prove the falsity of my theory, you bring in a dogma of the Church, I shall be obliged to close my mouth. If the Church chooses to declare false ideas to be dogmas, what can I do or say? I suppose we shall all have to believe that this lake is in America, instead of in Scotland, if the Church chooses to say so, even if we are convinced of the contrary!"

"You forget, Walter, that your theory is not as yet

a proved fact, or even recognised by science. The Church cannot teach what is not true."

"According to that, if the Church is right in holding as untrue everything that is not proved to be true, and thus put an end to all investigation and all discoveries, she was also right in asserting that the sun went round the earth, and she ought to be praised for making Galileo deny his wonderful discoveries. Neither was this a scientific truth *then*, and yet to-day it is recognised and admitted as such by all. To-morrow, very likely, the theory of the plurality of inhabited worlds will have a Galileo who will preach it, a Kepler who will demonstrate its truth, and a Newton who will establish its laws, and *then* we shall see if the Church *dare* to oppose it. But it seems to me that after the innumerable, profound, and most convincing works of Fontenelle, of Huygens, of Swedenborg, of Voltaire, of Charles Bonnet, of Guilmain, and, above all, of Flammarion, it is impossible to consider this doctrine any longer a *folly*, as some who think themselves very wise call it, or an *hallucination*, as the priests condescend to entitle it."

"I have never read any of the works of which you speak, and so I will not let myself be carried away by your enthusiasm. My father confessor has often told me that this is the only world, that there is no other in the universe, and I believe it; a priest of God could not be mistaken."

"And you believe rather in the opinions of a bigoted ignorant man, only because he is a priest, than

in the testimony of science, and in what common sense and philosophy teach us? Oh, Conchita! I will not oppose your superstitions, but it seems to me that you, who are so liberal and rational on every other subject, are most blind-folded and narrow-minded in everything that relates to religion."

"Oh, Walter! Walter!" exclaimed the young girl, throwing herself into my arms, and with her eyes full of tears, "can it be possible that you will always be offending my feelings and sentiments? you whom I love most in the world! Oh, if you love me as you say you do, do not speak to me again about religion. I may be superstitious, ignorant, illiberal, narrow-minded, anything you like, but I have been born a Catholic, and I will be one to the end of my life. . . ." She looked at me after she had said this, and then calming herself gradually she continued, showing me the moon which illuminated the lake at this moment with her silvery rays. "Is it possible that we must quarrel even before this pure and enchanting *honeymoon* has set upon the horizon of our lives!"

Those words went to my heart. It was a great trial for me, thus to make the being I loved so dearly, unhappy, and yet I could not restore her happiness without sacrificing my own convictions.

Conchita observed the struggle that was going on in my heart, and, taking my hand between hers, she said, in those sweet, melodious tones which only the voice of the woman one loves has for the ear:—"I

will try to forget, Walter, that the theory of the plurality of inhabited worlds has been condemned by our Holy Mother, the Church, and I want you simply to tell me the considerations which made you first adopt it, and the phenomena upon which you depend for its truth."

There was so much self-denial, such abnegation, in those words, that I at once began to hope in her conversion to my belief—I might say, to common sense; for when once you get a person to hear your arguments, half the battle is won. I tried my best, therefore, to prove to her the truth of this theory.

Among other things, I said:—

"Before all, my Conchita, I must impart to you the two fundamental truths, which, fortunately, are quite in accordance with the doctrines of our Church: these are, that God is just and wise in all His works, and that His empire is one of life, and not one of death.

"The world we inhabit is not a privileged earth, as some suppose; it is merely one of the eight planets which revolve round the sun. It forms no exception whatever among these, and it has not received the smallest privilege. On the contrary, it neither is the one nearest the sun, nor the one farthest away, nor even the centre one; it occupies the third place round this, and is one of the smallest; for without going out of our system, there are several others infinitely larger. Saturn, for instance, is seven hundred and thirty-four times larger, and Jupiter one thousand four hundred

and fourteen. If we compare the earth with those other planets, we find it decidedly an inferior world, under the most essential circumstances, from the geological and atmospheric conditions required for inhabitability, respecting which the earth is most badly situated to the fatal laws which rule life upon its surface. Some geologists have compared the earth to a very thin globe of glass of a yard in diameter, the inside of which is full of incandescent metals in fusion, which can burst when least expected. The weight of the earth, moreover, is tremendous, if we compare it with that of the other planets—Jupiter, for example, whose diameter is so much larger. The axis of the earth has also such an inclination, that this one-sided position causes its seasons to be so varied and its climates so changeable. This is, of course, a great disadvantage, from which other planets are free. In Jupiter, for instance, there are no seasons; all the year round it retains the same spring-like temperature.

“To pretend, therefore, that the earth is the best and most perfect of worlds, is utter nonsense. To those who live in it, and whose whole hopes and prospects are resting upon it, it may be the most important of all the universe; but, in reality, it is only one of the most insignificant planets of one of the smallest solar systems, of the millions which populate the heavens. Those beautiful stars which you see shining over your head, and of which the sky is so full, are quite ignorant of our existence, for the rays of our sun conceal us quite from their sight.

And even if it were not for this, they could not see us on account of our small size. Even among the planets of our own solar system, there are only four that can have any idea of our existence—Mercury, Venus, Mars, and Jupiter; and, for the last one, we remain the greater part of the time hidden by the rays of the sun.

“ You see, Conchita, that the earth cannot possibly be a privileged world; and since the time when Kepler demonstrated that the innumerable stars that surround us are suns like ours, round which turn thousands of planets as large or larger than ours, we have been obliged to admit that those worlds must also be, like ours, inhabited. On these, as upon the earth, the generative rays of the sun give light and heat—in different proportions, it is true, but in equivalent ones; and this heat and this light, that make both plants and beings upon our earth germinate and grow, why should it not cause the same effect in those other worlds which are in nothing different from ours? In them, as in ours, the months and the days succeed each other; in them, as in ours, a transparent atmosphere encircles in a temperate and adequate climate the habitable surface. Over them, as over ours, vaporous clouds rise from the ocean, and are dispersed under the sky, melting away when needed in beneficial rain, or in pure dew, which fecundates their beautiful fields. And can anyone live who says that all those beautiful worlds are uninhabited? Oh! this great movement of life which circulates on our earth

cannot be circumscribed to this small earthlet ! The same causes should produce *there* the same effects as they do *here* ; and most of these worlds possess conditions infinitely more favourable to organised existence than the earth itself.

“ I really cannot understand how men of talent and scientific men can assert that stars so magnificent as those which surround us have been created with the only purpose of beautifying the nights of such an imperceptible and insignificant earthlet as this. You say, Conchita, that this proves to us the love of God towards man, and also His greatness ; but it seems to me that He would have proved this better if He had placed us at once in one of those perfect and radiant worlds of light. Moreover, the greatness of the Creator consists in his economy, not in his waste. And you yourself must allow that to create millions of suns of such colossal size, to illuminate a world 1,400,000 times smaller than the smallest of them, is utter waste and nothing else.

“ The absurdity of such an opinion becomes greater still when we learn that Venus is a planet of about the same dimensions as the earth, which has its mountains and its seas, its seasons and its years, its days and its nights, the same as this ; these two worlds are alike in everything, so that if Venus is uninhabited, the earth should also be uninhabited, and in the same way if the earth is inhabited Venus must also be inhabited. But what can we say when we observe worlds such as Jupiter and Saturn, of

such colossal dimensions, of such fertile soil with altogether infinitely better conditions for organised existence, where the seasons do not change, and which are surrounded by numerous satellites that illuminate their nights till the sun, our own sun, rises again upon their horizon ! Surely we cannot deny inhabitants to those privileged giants, if we allow them to exist in this little world which is one thousand four hundred and fourteen times smaller than they are ?

“ Of course it will be said that the natural conditions of some of those worlds are very different from those of ours ; this is true, but it does not imply that life cannot exist upon them, because this life must be different from ours. It is absurd to pretend that without a certain number of equivalents of oxygen and carbon, the all-powerful God could not create any kind of beings ; that the divine creation is divided into three kingdoms upon this earth, is not a reason that others may not exist under different conditions in other planets, incompatible with any of the forms known on ours, where yet diversity is so great that no two faces resemble each other.

“ And then this cannot be an objection to the theory, for even if we put aside the worlds different from ours, yet there remain thousands of others similar in every respect to our earth, upon which we could live with as great or even greater ease than we can on this. Why should they not be inhabited ?

“ To deny the plurality of inhabited worlds seems to me an impiety and an insult to the wisdom and

greatness of the creator. Oh ! is it possible, my God, that any of thy children can thus limit thy powers, and believe thee only to be the father of the beings of this earth, when thou hast created all the universe !

“ Ah ! if the human eye were powerful enough to discover, there, where we only see points of light under the dark vault of heaven, the resplendent suns which gravitate in space and the glories of the worlds which, full of life, they illumine in their course through the ages ; if we could embrace with one look those countless millions of solar systems, and if advancing with the velocity of thought, we could traverse this unlimited number of suns and spheres, of which there seems to be no end, for God’s greatness and mercy is infinite ; if we could travel for centuries and centuries through this countless mass of worlds, and then look back towards that invisible speck of earth we call *the world*, we should certainly be confounded by the greatness of the scene, and uniting our voice to that of universal nature we would exclaim from the depth of our hearts—

“ Great God ! how short-sighted we are when we believe that there is nothing in the universe but that earth of ours, and that that initial and only temporary home of man has alone the privilege of reflecting thy greatness and thy power ! ”

My words, but more than all the beauty and grandeur of the scene before us, moved Conchita’s heart, and when I had finished she fell into my arms exclaiming : “ Oh thou art right, my husband, in

believing in those grand views ; for God, the God who made thy heart must be infinite, omnipotent, wise, and good !”

Those were her last words, she leant on my arm, so close to my heart that I could hear every palpitation of hers, and thus, side by side, we walked by the silvery lake’s side, until the moon set behind the mountains, when we entered the hotel for the night.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SUNRISE ON THE LAKE.

THE next morning we rose very early, in order to enjoy as much of the lake as possible ; we therefore directed our steps towards Loch Lomond, although it was as yet scarcely day. We traversed the gardens of the hotel till we arrived at the edge of the lake ; of course the pier was quite deserted at that early hour.

The first rays of light began to appear behind the mountains in the east, and this vague but rosy tint gave to the beautiful scene before us a mysterious character of the most enchanting nature.

“How much more delightful is this early hour, when we can walk alone by these beautiful shores, unobserved and free, than the middle of the day, when crowds of tourists and noisy travellers profane the solitude of this poetic lake, where only love and peace should dwell.” Thus said Conchita, as she fluttered like a butterfly among the flower beds of the garden. At last she arrived quite close to the shore of the lake, where several boats were tied to the pier, she paused for a moment, and then said, “Walter, do you see yonder green isle almost lost

amidst the tints of the early morning? I should so like to go there! Could we not take one of these boats and row towards it?"

I smiled, and, jumping into the nearest of them, assisted Conchita to embark. We soon found ourselves on the middle of the lake. I rowed, while she sat at the stern, steering our little bark towards the fairy-like isle in the distance.

"Won't you sing something, Walter," she said suddenly, "we only need music to make the charm of the scene complete."

Bending on my oars, and keeping time by their strokes upon the peaceful waters, I then sang:—

"Hurrah for the Highlands, the stern Scottish Highlands,
The home of the clansman, the brave, and the free,
Where the clouds love to rest on the ocean's rough breast,
Ere they traverse afar o'er the islandless sea.

"'Tis the land of deep shadow, of sunshine and shower,
Where the hurricane revels in madness on high,
For there it has might that can war with its power,
In the world's dizzy heights that are cleaving the sky.

"'Tis there where the cataract sings to the breeze,
As it dashes in foam like a spirit of light;
'Tis there the bold fisherman bounds o'er the sea,
In his flat tiny bark, through the perilous night.

"I have trod merry England, and dwelt on her charms,
I have wandered o'er Erin, that gem of the sea,
But the Highlands alone the true Scottish heart warms,
For her heather is blooming, her eagles are free.

"Then hurrah for the Highlands, the stern Scottish Highlands,
The home of the clansman, the brave, and the free,
Where the clouds love to rest on the ocean's rough breast,
Ere they travel afar o'er the islandless sea."

The little boat touched at last the fairy-like shore of the isle, and Conchita jumped upon the rock that surrounded it. The island, on which we had just landed, was one of the smallest of the archipelago which studs Loch Lomond, with its fresh verdure and its gray and picturesque rocks.

We left the boat, which had brought us thus far, tied to the trunk of an old tree which we found near the shore, and, after taking this necessary precaution, we began to explore the little isle.

This was an exceedingly small one, and in less than five minutes we had surveyed it in all directions. Conchita was no little annoyed when she became aware of its size, for she had begun to be proud of her discovery ; but in spite of its small size we found a virgin grove of trees, from which it was impossible to see the shore, and in this peaceful dale, where the rays of the brightly beaming sun did not yet penetrate, we sat for a long time side by side, listening to the sweet morning song of the birds. My lovely bride was much moved by the beauty of the scene, so new and so enchanting for her ; her impressionable soul was open to all that was pure and lovely as herself, and I could see that this wild and solitary spot had made a great impression on her mind.

“ Walter, Walter ! ” she exclaimed, bending her fair head upon my bosom, “ why should we not pass our whole lives here, amidst this natural verdure and those sweet birds ; this lovely little isle belongs to us

by the right of discovery? Here, away from the world, we could live the one for the other."

I took her in my arms, and, holding her to my heart, allowed a few minutes to elapse before answering her. During this pause we were so close to each other that I could feel her warm soothing breath upon my brow. At last I said, breaking the sweet spell,

"Would that be perfect happiness, Conchita, according to your idea?"

"Yes, darling, by your side everything is happiness."

"Then, why retire far away from the homes of men to live as savages upon a desert island?"

"Because that in the world all is so soon forgotten. Yes, forgotten like a dream; even love may become indifference, and you will, perhaps, soon forget me, whom now you love so much, whilst here we could live for ever the same, the one for the other, and no stranger would come between us to disturb our felicity—to rob me, perhaps, of your love, Walter!"

"Oh, Conchita, my sweet one! how little you are aware of the necessities of this life, and how little you know even your own heart; that which to-day is a heaven to you, could very easily become to-morrow a hell. It is not the place that causes our happiness, but the state of our own hearts. Our minds need constant food, in order to remain in a continual state of happiness; our hearts need to vary their sen-

sations to be for ever constant ; one idea alone cannot fill a whole existence, nor can even love fill a whole heart ; we need a succession of ideas and a succession of feelings in order to be perfectly happy, and to save ourselves from ennui, which would indeed be a foe to love. If we were to live here alone for ever, our love, apart from the rest of humanity, would soon come to an end ; in the world, among men and among their ideas and their pursuits, it will be renewed and prolonged. Everything in life produces a fortuitous succession of thoughts and ideas, over which we do not possess the smallest control. The phenomena of nature succeed each other incessantly, the same with our feelings. How well did the ancient philosopher know human nature when he said that *we lived from day to day !* Yes, my Conchita, as day succeeds to day, one event succeeds another, one idea and one affection gives place or assists to develop other ideas and other affections, whilst we, poor toys of nature, are at a loss to explain to our own selves the change that has taken place ; for in the human heart there is, without our knowing it, a perpetual succession of passions that cannot cease, so that the ruin of one is always the foundation of another. Love, like all other fires, cannot exist without perpetual fuel ; both cease to live as soon as they cease to hope, or to fear, and this succession of events and feelings is necessary for the education of our spirit, which is the only object of our earthly pilgrimage from early childhood through all the experiences of manhood.

“ How well St Paul knew the great truth he ex-

pressed in these words, ‘When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.’ This happens to us all. I myself, when I draw a comparison between my present self and what I was only a few years ago, find that there is scarcely one point of similarity, and I could almost swear that I am quite a different being, if it were not for my memory, that reminds me of every phase and every experience through which my spirit has passed, and which has contributed to make it what it now is; but if some day I were to lose all memory of the past, I should at the same time lose my own identity, and yet I should still be the same being. What resemblance is there between the young Walter who played in Northumberland with his cousins, and the most intimate friends of his school-days, who have long ago forgotten him, and whom he also soon forgot, and the Walter whom you now see at your feet, happy because he can call himself thine?

“And yet I was also happy then, or at least I thought myself so, but how different is the happiness which I experience at this moment. Truly, my spirit must be quite changed, for it is the ideas and the feelings which constitute it, and they have undergone a total change.

“And my body, is it, perchance, the same? Surely not. The body of the boy Walter, must lie to-day changed into earth or into leaves in distant countries of the world, for it has long ago been proved that

every seven years we change our bodies completely, on account of the continual combustion which takes place in us. Thus, not an atom, not a particle remains of what I was only seven years ago ; and my spirit, I may almost say, is also another, for the phenomena of nature produce different impressions upon it from what they produced only seven years ago, and all its tastes and feelings have undergone a total variation. Am I not, then, another in both body and soul ?

“ If I had died and been born again, I could not be more changed, and yet the world still calls me Lord Carlton !

“ I do not know if this theory has ever before been expressed, but I have often thought about it, and I can hardly doubt of its truth, yet you know, my darling, that my motto is,—‘ *I deny nothing, and I assert nothing ; I only speculate, and seek for truth.*’

“ From this view I infer that as our spirit changes and progresses, or rather is developed, our thoughts are remoulded, our ideas unfold as we behold a vaster horizon ; thus comes the ease with which we forget what at the beginning had such charms for us, but which delights us no longer, for, as la Rochefoucauld says, ‘ the duration of our passions is not more dependent upon us than the duration of our life.’ ”

“ But if such be the case, Walter, what becomes of free-will ? surely we are masters of our own hearts.”

“ Only to a certain point. Sometimes we should like to love, and yet we cannot ; at others, we love whom we ought not to love. No man is free in this

world. We are all the creatures of circumstances, and of the various experiences which go to make up our lives, and which have made us what we are ; our feelings change without our knowing it. It is true that one love can fill the whole of a human life, but to do this it must undergo certain variations and changes, even as human life itself is composed of a succession of changes.

“Thus, my own Conchita, the love which to-day I have for you is not the love with which you inspired me when, for the first time, I saw you in the convent of Seville. In reality, the first impressions have quite disappeared. I remember that love with pleasure, but I cannot feel it anew ; to-day another passion fills my whole being, and yet you are still its object.

“When I first saw thee, Conchita, I loved thee on account of thy beauty, which surpassed all the dreams that, in my fancy, I had drawn of an ideal perfection. You were to me Murillo’s Conception herself, stepping out of her frame in the holy temple, to take me with you to heaven, and I loved you with all my heart, and I imagined that this love would fill the whole of my existence, and yet this love soon vanished from my heart, but only to give place to another.

“I had known you for a week, and this short space of time was enough for your mind to efface your beauty from my heart. Oh ! call me not inconstant, Conchita, if I forgot the latter to fill my whole existence with the former ! But how different was

not even this love from that which to-day I feel for you. Then, I must confess, I was selfish, I wanted you to be mine, I wanted to be able to call myself thine, and I was desirous of possessing your love, for I felt the blindest passion for you. But the feeling with which to-day you inspire me is a passion infinitely more holy, more spiritual. I love you for yourself, and for what you are. Then I could have sacrificed you to a passion which I thought eternal; to-day you find me ready to sacrifice myself to your most simple wish. Then I wanted to make you mine, before God and before men; to-day I am happy, for I am thine, the world has nothing to do between us two, for we now are one, united in soul and sympathy."

"You are right, Walter," said Conchita, when I had finished. "You are right; I have felt the same, though I could not explain it to myself. I have often observed that my love towards you, my darling husband, was undergoing a change, although it still was as true and constant as ever. During our voyage from Spain, mamma often found me crying, and almost unhappy. "Don't you love Lord Carlton, Conchita," she used to say, "and I could not answer. I doubted myself. But do not accuse me for this, darling; you know that I live for you; if our love has changed, our hearts are still the same, and, as now we are so happy, why should we not forget the world and continue living in the same love to the end of our days? I am so happy . . . thus . . . in thy arms!" and the beautiful girl

put my arm round her heavenly form, which I pressed to my heart.

“Yes, my Conchita, this would, indeed, be perfect happiness, if we could stop the march of time; if we could say to eternity, as Joshua said to the sun, *stop*. But, unfortunately, this is impossible, unless we were to do as those famous lovers, who, thinking themselves one day so perfectly happy, killed themselves, so that not one minute should elapse after that moment of complete felicity. But if we are to remain in the world there is no standing still, we shall be obliged to change, for everything around us will continue to advance and progress.”

“Fortuitously?”

“No: have I, perchance, used that horrible word? If I have, I correct it, for it is too materialistic, too atheistic, to be philosophical; no, fortuitously, perhaps it may seem for us who are ignorant of the laws of nature, for us, for whom everything seems casual, but not for the Supreme Creator, who has established the invariable laws which rule the universe.

“Yes, for every change must follow certain laws, for every effect of nature there exists a law created or developed at the same time. ‘In prima institutione naturæ non quaeritur miraculum, sed quid natura rerum habeat, ut Augustinus dicit,’ as your countryman St Thomas of Aquinas used to say. Yes, it is according to these laws that one step follows another, although they may seem to us only the effects of chance.

“This beautiful island, that to-day smiles on us with its fresh verdure, will be in a few months covered with snow, and that blue lake will be changed into a hard frozen surface. Those birds that to-day greet the rising sun with their merry songs will be dead, or have disappeared ; and we ourselves, in a very few years, shall have put on the wintry garments of age like the first, or like the latter shall have died—nay, rather, we, like the little birds, shall have flown away to inhabit milder and happier regions, nearer to the bright summer land, where our lives will be a perpetual dream of love.”

“But for this, one must die ! Walter, one must die !” repeated my young bride, while all the colour forsook her face. “Die, and with death comes separation and forgetfulness. . . .”

I took her by the hand, and I led her to the shore of the lake. “Who has told you that, Conchita ? I have often assured you, my darling, that death, or rather the change you call by that name, is neither annihilation nor forgetfulness, and perhaps not even separation. It is only a change of state, not a change of being. I have just told you that if I had died two or three times during the short period of my life, and been born again, I could not be more changed than I am, and it is the truth ; the day of death brings but a change in our way of being, a change of state, it is the birthday of the soul, nothing more. Do you believe our love to be so poor a thing, my darling, that death can make us forget one another ? No ; we may

forget what belonged to our body which remains upon the earth, but that which belongs to our spirit goes to heaven with it."

"And, how do you know that, Walter? Have you, perchance, seen some one after death who has told you his adventures in the other world?"

"Do not laugh at me, Conchita, because in my ignorance I want to picture to myself death and the after life. I know very well that hitherto this has not been generally known in the world, but yet there have always been certain intuitive things which our hearts tell us, and which all the cold philosophy of this world cannot silence or efface from our minds. But do not let us think any more on this subject, which seems so sad to you, although it fills my whole being and causes my happiness; forget it, and think only of our present felicity, and of the glorious spectacle before us."

"Look, yonder comes the powerful king of day,
Rejoicing in the east; the lessening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow
Illumed with fluid gold, his near approach
Betoken glad! Lo! now, apparent all,
Aslant the dew-bright earth and colour'd air,
He looks in boundless majesty abroad,
And sheds the shining day, that burnish'd plays
On rocks, and hills, and towers, and wandering streams,
High gleaming from afar. Prime cheerer light!
Of all material beings first and best!
Efflux divine! Nature's resplendent robe!
Without whose vesting beauty all were wrapt
In unessential gloom; and thou, O Sun!
Soul of surrounding worlds! in whom between
Shines out thy Maker, may I sing of thee?"

The sun had just appeared behind Ben Lomond, and the scene which it unfolded before our eyes was sublime. The mountain seemed as a giant of the abyss veiled in darkness which was struggling to the very last with the king of day to intercept his passage.

The rays of the sun did not, as yet, reach the peaceful and deep waters of the lake below, and while in heaven all was light, darkness yet prevailed over the earth, and a bluish mist covered the distant hills.

I observed this to Conchita, and then I said, "What you see at the present moment is precisely the image of what is actually passing in the world, light struggling with darkness, reason with ignorance, religion with materialism. The world as yet is in almost complete darkness, but the sun is rising in all its glory, and a new day will dawn for humanity, for before light darkness always flies."

Soon afterwards the sun rose high in the eastern sky, and the whole landscape became illuminated by its all-powerful rays.

There, before us, was Scotland, arrayed in all her beauty, and from this, the most beautiful spot of her loveliest lake, we could see her hills and her valleys, her highlands and her lakes, that have made her name famous throughout the whole world.

Carried away by the grandeur of the scene, I could not restrain myself from exclaiming,

"I salute thee, Scotland! from this, thy most

beautiful lake, which the rising sun illuminates with its golden rays, oh Scotland, I salute thee!

“Thy soil is damp, thy climate is bad, but thou, oh Scotland! knowest how to derive benefit from the one, and from the other to adorn thy beauty; mother of the lakes, daughter of the mountains, country of verdure, how poetical thou art! All in thee breathes love and poetry, all in thee are brave and grand. Thou, the most beautiful of the daughters of the north, thou unrivalled mother who didst adopt as thine own the sons of thy neighbour kingdom, when thou gavest thy Stuart king to thy sister of the south, thus happily cementing a peaceful union between two rival powers, henceforth to fight side by side, and share each other's dangers and glories for evermore.

“Oh, sweet and gentle Scotland, how many brave hard-working heroes hast thou nursed on thy bosom; hidden, unthought of by the rest of the universe? Other of thy sons have lived and fought, loved and died, but their noble deeds and their gallant actions belong to fame, who, like a faithful echo of the past, loudly and sweetly sings to-day their praises.

“They call thee *cold*! Ah! how little they know the hidden fire which burns in thee! Under the bosom which thou so modestly veileth with mists and clouds, vaporous as the spray of thy water-falls, there lie hidden hearts faithful and true. Yes, thou hast been the country of lovers such as Helen Douglas and Lucy Ashton, whose lives were filled entirely with

one sole, pure, all-consuming passion, thou hast suggested those loves, sweet, holy, constant, faithful, that are only felt in the north, where the shorter and more vehement passions of the south are unknown. Thou also wast the mother of heroes such as William Wallace and Robert the Bruce, who sacrificed their whole lives for thee ; thou didst inspire their abnegation and their heroism, thou gavest them courage and perseverance. Martyrs found in thee the palm of martyrdom, as the sad history of thy beautiful and ill-fated Queen Mary, and of many others can attest. Great generals, great men of science and of learning, great poets and authors, hast thou produced in countless numbers. Who could enumerate them ? To inventors thou hast also given birth—Watt, to whom the world is indebted for its commerce and its riches, owes to thee his life and his education.

“And thou, oh sun ! that in thy ceaseless daily course hast beheld all these heroes of the past, risest again to-day, as thou didst then, to assist at new acts of heroism and abnegation. Thou, who art the emblem of progress, appearest to direct its course through the centuries ; thou, like civilisation, risest in the east, reaching thy might in Europe, and disappearing behind the immense plains of the far west, whither our civilization seems to direct its steps, following in thy wake. At this moment thou dost illuminate with all thy splendour the rich and prosperous states of Europe, after having poured the noontide splendour over ancient orient cities and Egyptian monuments of the

past, that once basked in thy effulgence, the light of the earth, but thou wilt in turn abandon Europe to bestow thy beams on the as yet virgin regions of America.

“See this beautiful country, warmed and illumined by thy glorious rays, what success and glory has it not achieved? But what could man not do with the sure consciousness that the eye of his Maker is upon him?

“They are right, oh Scotland, who call thy capital the Athens of the north. Yes! Mid-Lothian is indeed of knowledge the throne, and of modern science the cradle! Edinburgh! thou, who hast beheld so many dramas; thou, whose soil was watered with the tears of the Stuarts; thou, who hast been so often the scene of heroism and crime, of virtue and of humiliation, of glory and of triumph; thou, who didst listen to the sermons of St Augustine, and of Knox; thou who didst stand so firm against Cæsar himself, deserved in very truth to be the capital of Scotland.

“And thou, oh Glasgow! city of riches, to whom, not so very long ago, was denied the name of the mere capital of a county, to-day, unaided and alone, thou hast arisen from the dust to glory and renown. City of gold, where every inhabitant owes what he is to-day to his work of yesterday; thou, who hast known how to enlarge thy river at the same time as thy commerce and thy industry; thou art indeed of Caledonia, the populous metropolis!

“Scotland! Scotland! . . . what words could

express all I feel for thee, and what song would be sweet or lofty enough to describe thy beauties, and to recount thy glories, could one individual judge a nation?

“This peaceful lake is a true portrait of thy greatness and of thy poetry. As in it, so in thee, are reflected all that the world contains that is grand and majestic, and the sun shines in his meridian splendour over thee as upon these waters, displaying all thy beauties and all thy charms.

“Conchita! Conchita! would it be possible to describe this enchanting scene? How could any one paint those vaporous clouds of golden gauze with which these mountains are modestly veiled? Those pure and serene waters which, illuminated by the rising sun, appear before our eyes now as a sheet of molten silver, now of rippling fire and flame? And those bold rocks that rise against the blue sky like the ruined battlements of some Gothic castle, and those promontories which rise out of the loch itself, and at whose base the white waters dash in foam and spray? And, high above all, Ben Lomond, the glory of thy highlands, who, as the monarch of those princely giants, presides over this inimitable spectacle?

“And those bright clear streams which come down with a leap, and a desire to lose themselves in the lake? And those dark burns that come trickling through passes and deep ravines to dash in waterfalls upon the waters below?

“And those deep, mysterious caves, where the peaceful waters of the lake are lost at every rising wave? And those silent far distant valleys, of which the eye just catches a glimpse between the mountains?”

“And those transparent waters, where all these beauties are portrayed, upon which the clouds, the rocks, the crags, the mountain, the streams, the waterfall, the cave, and even the shadow of the passing bird is reflected?”

“Ah! who could paint all this, who could even imagine them in all their beauty? How poor is language to give expression to what the eye takes in at a glance, and what so deeply touches the heart!”

Carried away by my poetical imagination, I had climbed up the rock which marked the shores of the little isle; and Conchita, moved by the grandeur and sublimity of the surrounding scene, had seated herself on those same rocks, and had her eyes fixed upon the now risen sun, as if she wished to learn from him some of the mysteries which he beholds in his daily course.

The day was advancing, and so was the heat, so we at last decided on returning to the hotel. It was with difficulty, however, that we tore ourselves away from this fairy-like scene—a scene that will never be blotted out of our minds!

CHAPTER XV.

LOCH KATRINE.

FROM Tarbet we proceeded by steamer to Inversnaid, where the Arklet, a picturesque little stream, descends from the mountains, dashing from rock to rock, and from crag to crag, with a beating hollow din. Here we took our seats in a sort of a waggonette, drawn by four horses, which took us through, or rather over, a wild mountain pass, bordering on Loch Arklet, to Stronachlachar, a distance of four or five miles.

In this primitive little highland village we found a fairy steamer, appropriately named ‘The Lady of the Lake,’ waiting to take us to the other side of Perthshire, through Loch Katrine.

The first view one obtains of this lovely lake from the Stronachlachar approach is most impressive.

Loch Katrine is smaller, and perhaps does not possess such grand and varied scenery as Loch Lomond, but its beauty is even softer, wilder, more compact, more picturesque. So true it is that one beauty succeeds and ever rivals another in this fairy land. “It is much prettier, much more seductive,” we exclaimed, as our tiny steamer wound in and out, sometimes appearing perfectly land-locked amid its wooded

islands. The banks are thickly covered with the most luxuriant foliage, and every tree, and every flower is reflected upon the mirror-like surface of its calm still waters. Behind the trees, and above the ever-green meadows, rise the steep, dark, bold mountains of the Trossachs, with high Benvenue towering above all on the right.

“What a scene were here, . . .
For princely pomp or churchman’s pride.
On this bold brow, a lordly tower ;
In that soft vale, a lady’s bower ;
On yonder meadow, far away,
The turrets of a cloister gray.
How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn
How sweet, at eve, the lover’s lute
Chime, when the groves are still and mute !
And, when the midnight moon should lave
Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matin’s distant hum,
While the deep peal’s commanding tone
Should wake in yonder islet lone,
A sainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell—
And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
Should each bewildered stranger call
To friendly feast and lighted hall.”

Loch Katrine has been immortalised by Scott, and when one beholds its lovely shores, it is impossible not to think of the lovely Ellen Douglas steering her light bark with skilful oar from shore to isle, and to see the royal James casting wondering glances on the mysterious scene and the gentle pilot conducting

him to a safe haven in her hidden and mysterious home, and to remember the beautiful and graphic descriptions of the Scotch Minstrel. None else could paint so truthfully the highland scenes of the Trossachs in all their grandeur, none other could make one feel the majesty of the lake he has made so famous with his verses. I must therefore quote from his poem.

“ The summer down’s reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled, but dimpled not for joy:
The mountain shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest ;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to fancy’s eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice oped of silver bright ;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn
Begemmed with dew-drops, led her fawn ;
The gray mist left the mountain side,
The torrent showed its glittering pride ;
Invisible in fleckèd sky
The lark sent down her revelry ;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush ;
In answer coo’d the cushat-dove,
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.”

The steamer advanced gently along the surface of the peaceful water ; the scene became every moment more and more intensely lovely. In front of us we beheld Ellen’s Isle, so celebrated in the poem. We may be told that it is a mere fiction, the mere dream of a poetical brain, but is it so ? When one sees the lovely islet rock covered with verdure,

“ Where for retreat in dangerous hour
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.”

We cannot doubt of the truth of the romantic story of Ellen Douglas and the knight of Snowdon ; the whole poem passes before us more like a reality than a dream, and every moment one expects to see the beautiful lady of the lake emerge from under an aged oak, and jump into the little boat that must lie concealed behind the luxuriant foliage.

At last we reached the other end of the lake, where we found a coach waiting our arrival, to take us to the Ardcheanochrochan hotel, which is situated on the banks of Loch Achray.

To get there we went through the pass of the Trossachs, so well described by Sir Walter Scott in the following verses :—

“ The western waves of ebbing day
Rolled o’er the glen their level way :
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle ;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar’s plain,
Their rocky summits split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,

Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair ;
For, from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dew drop's sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes,
Waved in the west wind's summer sighs.
Boon Nature scattered, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalmed the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there ;
The primrose pale, and violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower ;
Fox-glove and night-shade side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Grouped their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Gray birch and aspen wept beneath ;
Aloft the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock ;
And higher yet the pine tree hung
His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrowed sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glist'ning streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue ;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream."

Yes, indeed, the scenery was much more like a fairy dream than anything else. It would be impossible to describe this beautiful pass as we beheld it for the first time in all the glow of an autumn sunset.

It would be impossible to render justice to those wild and bold rocks hung over with rowan, hawthorn, and pine trees, all in their brightest autumn tints. It would be impossible to give an idea of the high and rugged mountains that surround the pass in all directions, and that awaken in the beholder a sense of over-powering grandeur of awe and mystery !

Wordsworth has so well expressed the emotions the Trossachs awaken in the mind of the traveller, that I cannot refrain from repeating his beautiful verses.

“ There’s not a nook within this solemn pass
But were an apt confessional for one
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it ’mid Nature’s old festivities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy guest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October’s workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest !”

Early in the evening we reached the Trossachs hotel, which is situated in front of the little lake of Achray, in one of the most beautiful spots of this sublime pass.

After our dinner, Conchita and I went out for a walk, and amongst other things we visited the spot where the hermit monk foretold the doom of Roderick Dhu.

“How haunted all this district seems to be with the genius of Scott,” said Conchita, seating herself upon some rocks that bounded the narrow ravine of Glenfinlass.

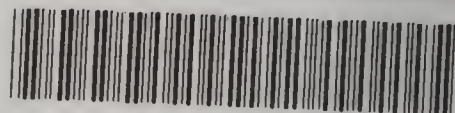
“Yes, my love, it costs us a sigh to doubt the truth of his wild romantic tales, when one closes the book after having read them at home in a comfortable drawing-room of modern times; but when one traverses this rugged pass, when one beholds this lovely smiling fairy-like isle on Loch Katrine, one can no longer deny the reality of his fantastic dreams, we are under the spell of his harp, and we *must* take as a reality the whole of his lay.”

“Don’t you know some romantic story, Walter, associated with this wild mountain pass? You know how fond I am of listening to your legends, and at the present moment anything associated with Scotland would have the greatest interest for me.”

“I know an old legend of the feudal times of Scottish history, which, although it has nothing whatever to do with the beautiful glen in which we are at the present moment, may perhaps interest you.”

I seated myself by her side among the blooming purple heather, and, with my arm supporting her beloved form, I began the following story.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00022083922

